

# Street Food around the World

An Encyclopedia of  
Food and Culture

Bruce Kraig and  
Colleen Taylor Sen, Editors



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**Bruce Kraig and Colleen Taylor Sen, Editors**



Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado • Oxford, England

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# PREFACE

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Street food is one of the most important sectors of the world food economy. An estimated 2.6 billion people eat street food in some form every day, and for many, street food is their main source of nutrition. Once associated mainly with developing countries, street food is making inroads into the developed world, especially in North America, with the advent of food trucks in major cities. Not to be outdone, top chefs have opened restaurants specializing in street food, and such items as hot dogs, bhel puri, and tacos have been reincarnated as gourmet items on the menus of upscale restaurants. Television programs, even entire series, are devoted to exploring the culinary delights of the street. Street food is one of the centerpieces of culinary tourism for people in pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences.

This encyclopedia is the first book of its scope devoted to this important, endlessly fascinating culinary realm. Its purpose is to provide an overview of the world's street food by country or region. It covers not only such street-food superstars as India, China, Thailand, and Mexico (which admittedly deserve volumes of their own) but also countries where street food plays a less important role, such as those in Northern Europe. Our reasoning was that travelers to these countries might also be in search of a street-food experience, which may be somewhat harder to find.

Our contributors include some of the world's leading food historians, academics, and journalists. While we are most grateful for their contributions, any responsibility for errors is our own.

In addition to the contributors listed as authors, we would like to thank the following people: Dr. Carolyn Kirschner (Nigeria), Sharif Islam (Bangladesh), Sharda Thapar (Nepal), Ursula Heinzelman (Germany), Peggy Mohan (Trinidad and Tobago), Michael Kaganiuk and Malgorzata Szkaradek (Poland), Vivek Batra (India), George Macht (China) for details on regional Chinese dishes, Geraldine Rounds (China), Robert Rounds (Finland), Kantha Shelke (Food Safety) Michael and Kathleen Frith (Indonesia), Clarisse Zimra (France), and Charles Perry (Yemen).

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# INTRODUCTION

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## What Is Street Food?

All human beings dine, meaning that their food is prepared or processed in various ways, and there are rules of conduct in the ways that it is eaten. As social animals, humans usually dine with others—within families, among friends, or in public settings. Public dining comes in many forms, from various kinds of indoor restaurants to such organizational meals as church suppers and fish fries, to summer picnics. Worldwide, the most common form of public dining is known as street food. This phrase covers many kinds of venues and lots of varieties of food. Today, roughly 2.5 billion people around the planet eat street food.

An ordinary definition of the term “street food” is a food prepared by a vendor and sold from an open-air stand, cart, truck, or perhaps a market stall. The food served is usually in the fast and snack food categories; that is, prepared quickly from premade ingredients and served in timely fashion. Street food is also usually eaten out of hand, meant to be consumed on the spot or while walking.

Street food has broader definitions and meanings than simply snacks eaten by people on the move. Street food is commercial because it is made by individual entrepreneurs and sold to customers. It is food that belongs to cities and towns, anywhere where people gather for business or even recreation. Therefore, the places where these foods are served can include not only streets, but also open air and enclosed markets where individuals vend wares. The small stands in Mexico’s food markets, called *fondas*, are examples. Other venues include amusement areas such as carnivals, fairs, and boardwalks, and athletic events, bus and train stations, and schools.

The actual food served as street food may be categorized as snacks; junk food; basic foodstuffs—some more nutritionally complete than others; and examples of national or regional cultures. Any of the foods can be made in several ways. Many are premade by commercial manufacturers. Others are made by the individual sellers or their families. For instance, hot dogs are almost always bought from sausage-making companies. Tacos, sold on the streets and in the markets of Mexico, are almost all made by the purveyors themselves. It is these that most people consider to be the best examples of a local culture and the most delicious.

Snack foods, meant to be taken between meals or while doing some activity besides formal dining, are common in the street-food world. Some are more nutritious than others. When going to the movies, Egyptians often stop at street vendor stands to get bags of *foul* or cooked broad beans mixed with seasonings. Spicy

## World's Best Cities for Street Food

1. Bangkok, Thailand
2. Singapore
3. Penang, Malaysia
4. Marrakech, Morocco
5. Palermo, Sicily
6. Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
7. Istanbul, Turkey
8. Mexico City, Mexico
9. Brussels, Belgium
10. Ambergris Caye, Belize (beachside ceviche)

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Source: Reuters, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/20/uk-travel-picks-food-idUSLNE86J02720120720>

Indian *chaat* is eaten on the run and now found around the world. Americans eat their contribution to world cuisine, popcorn, in large quantities. And in both the Middle East and South Asia, sweets of bewildering variety are made by local sellers and dispensed to ready audiences.

Street food can also be junk in that the individual items sold have little nutritional value and can even be harmful if eaten regularly. Cotton candy, deep-fried candy bars, and fried batters—just about deep-fried anything—are some of the many forms of junk food sold at public events and eagerly consumed by happy fairgoers.

Around the world, in many areas of poverty, street food is a means of feeding large numbers of poor people. Today some 2.5 billion people depend on street food as their main source of daily calories. Largely this is because the raw ingredients are bought in local markets, or brought in from the countryside, and made by the seller on the spot or at home. Food of this kind is cheap and usually high in carbohydrates as well. *Gari*, roasted cassava mush served on the streets of Ghana's cities, is one example. Fresh fruit and fruit juices, which are widely sold, provide other essential nutrients.

While street food can be important in providing nutrition to people with little money, many are thought of as integral to a people's culinary culture. Whether cornmeal-based *arepas* in Venezuela, kebabs in Turkey, dumplings in Russia, Central Asia, China, and Korea, or even fried or toasted insects in Southeast Asia, all are models of local food culture. Visitors from other countries almost invariably sample street food as important parts of their tourism experiences.

Visitors and local people alike have kept street-food industries alive almost everywhere. In all, some two and a half billion people across the globe eat street food every day.

The sale of street food is also a widespread form of self-employment for the poor and otherwise unemployed in cities in developing countries. It requires relatively basic skills and small amounts of capital, and provides the vendor's families with a reasonable income. It also provides food security to the urban poor, who may not have the assets to prepare their own meal. It has been estimated that in India alone, there are more than 10 million street vendors, and some studies say they constitute around 2 percent of the population of the major metropolises. In developed countries, food carts and trucks can be a gateway for trained chefs who do not have the resources to launch a brick-and-mortar restaurant.

## Where Is Street Food Found?

### Mobile Venues

The first street-food vendors sold their products from trays, baskets, and portable stands. As far back as ancient Mesopotamian civilizations, vendors set up portable stands in primitive bazaars from which people could buy dried dates and fish. So common were serving trays through the history that they are commemorated in the early English nursery rhyme, "Simple Simon." Simple trays or baskets hung by a strap from vendors' necks are still universal, such as Turkish *simit* sellers who can be found in every city and town. Baskets evolved into heated or cooled boxes in the United States, and today, ballpark hawkers sell everything from hot dogs, to peanuts and popcorn to ice cream and beer from such neck-hung containers.

Trays and baskets can hold only so much food, so vehicles of various kinds became widely used early in historical times. The most basic is a wheelbarrow with a flat, open platform. That device is celebrated in a 19th-century song about a fictional shellfish seller, Molly Malone, who "pushed her wheel barrow through streets broad and narrow crying 'cockles and mussels alive alive oh.'" Humble one or two wheel wooden barrows became pushcarts, either two or four wheeled, and usually enclosed food cases. By the 19th century, many had heating units where food was kept warm or even cooked on the spot. One variation is the pushcart attached to bicycles. Called *tricyclo* around the world, the most famous in the United States were ice-cream tricycles that used to be found in neighborhoods across the country. Pushcarts are the most common form of street-food vending, examples ranging from *thattukadas* in South India to *frietcot* in Belgium and Netherlands and ice-cream carts almost everywhere.

More sophisticated mobile venues appeared when horses were attached to wagons in the last third of the 19th century. Often called "lunch wagons," these were

small versions of railway dining cars. Usually food was served from a service window on the side of the wagon. Others were set up as walk-in fast food restaurants with a serving counter at one end of the wagon. Most wagons served lunches to people working in factories and offices who needed fast service because their lunch breaks were short. With the advent of the internal combustion engine, lunch wagons became self-moving, able to move faster and to more locations. Made out of stainless steel and with heating and cooling systems and still called lunch wagons, these serve many working people in North America and around the world. In recent years, another form of lunch wagon has appeared on the world's streets: food trucks. In the early 21st century, food trucks have become one of the fastest growing segments of the dining industry. Looking like delivery vans and often highly decorated, food trucks serve every kind of food imaginable. In North America, these include Asian, Mexican, German, African, Jamaican, South American, upscale hot dogs, hamburgers, pizza, cupcakes, cakes and pies, and many mixtures of cuisines. In Europe, food trucks have followed the same trend, usually serving such ethnic foods as North African, Burmese, Nepalese, Indian, and others. Food trucks are increasingly popular the world over.

Trailers are another kind of portable food-vending venue. These come in two forms. One is basically a cart where the vendor stands alongside the vehicle, making and serving food. The other kind is like a food truck with cooking or heating and cooling equipment inside and sold through a window. Most of the famous New York food carts are actually trailers that are hauled away from their locations every night. The larger trailers are commonly seen at such seasonal locations as fairs and at some summer resorts. Virtually all food served at state and county fairs, such as ice-cream stands, corn dogs, caramel corn, cotton candy, saltwater taffy, and the many kinds of fried food come from trailers.

## Fixed Sites

Street food merges with fast food when it is offered at fixed locations. Hot dogs and tacos, for instance, are among the world's first street foods, but in cities like Chicago, they are sold from fixed stands because of local regulations. The setups in walk-in stands are like food trucks in that the food is served from behind a counter; the customer going outside or standing in another small counter to eat it.

Other fixed stands are more rudimentary. European kiosks, essentially booths but somewhat larger, are located in and around public squares, railway stations, and shopping areas. They offer everything from sausages, to crepes, fish, breads, and sweets and are heavily patronized. Similar kiosks are common in Asia's cities, especially in popular retail shopping centers. In Mexico and Latin America, fixed stands called *fondas* are features of every enclosed market and many retail food stores. These are simple counters with cooking apparatuses behind them

on which food is prepared and served. They are among the world's best eateries because the food is always fresh and made by experienced cooks using home recipes.

One can consider the United States' drive-ins and drive-throughs as kinds of street food because the food is prepared and eaten outside, or at least eaten in vehicles. And many of the dishes are the same as in street stands and carts. Drive-ins are places where diners pull their cars into bays and place orders over speaker systems. The food is then delivered. These were once very popular though only a few chains still exist. Drive-throughs are locations where drivers pull up to a service window and pick up food that they have ordered via an intercom. These are very common; one of them, Taco Bell, sells one of the ultimate street dishes.

### **Semisedentary Machines**

One very modern kind of public food service place is the vending machine that stands in one place but can be moved to another. Coin-operated machines are so universal that they are integrated into almost every country's food culture. Invented in England in the 1880s, they were adapted to chewing gum dispensers in the United States in the 1890s and soda machines in the 1920s. Modern vending machines usually sell such prepackaged industrially made food as candy and sodas. However, many are highly sophisticated, especially in Asia, which has the world's greatest concentration. These can make such items as hot ramen noodles, rice dishes, fresh French fries, and many others, to say nothing of such hot drinks as coffee. Increasingly around the world, robots are replacing human vendors.

## **How Is Street Food Prepared?**

Street foods are prepared in almost every way known to human beings. Cooking equipment is geared directly to the ways that food is cooked and so are ingredients. For instance, deep-frying requires a deep-frying pot, a high heat source, and lots of oil (which is almost always industrially produced). The same can be said for metal pots, pans, and griddles, most of which are made in factories.

Heat sources depend on locally available materials and legal regulations. The earliest heating fuel was wood, followed by charcoal, then coal and kerosene or paraffin. Wood is still used in many parts of the world, in Africa, for instance, in firepits, ovens, or simply set within a circle of stones over which a pot can be set. Charcoal is wood that has been burned under cover so that the carbon and some ash remain in it. Charcoal burns well and is a staple of backyard grilling. It is also widely used to cook street food even in some New York City carts, despite smoke pollution regulations. In the 17th century, coal began to replace charcoal in England (because England was running out of trees to cut) and the practice of



using mined coal for heating and industry spread around the world. Coal-fired heating units are still used in such countries as China to create very high heat for street-food dishes even though coal is highly polluting. Kerosene, also known as paraffin, is a liquid fuel refined from petroleum. It was created in the 1850s and eventually became widely popular for food preparation at home, in restaurants, and on the street. It is still very popular in India and East Asia for cooking and also in camping stoves around the world. In India, a popular cooking fuel is *gobar*, dried cow dung.

Most purveyors in the Western world use gas, either in its natural state or as propane or butane. Propane gas tanks are universal in portable home gas grills and in street-food vehicles. It is relatively cheap and safe and produces high heat depending on the kind of grill used.

Electricity is also used for street-food preparation. Mostly it runs machinery for confections. Popcorn makers, cotton candy spinners, saltwater taffy makers, ice-cream and ice-based mixers, shavers, and batter mixers are all electric devices. And, of course, electricity runs all the lighting in Asia's famous night markets.

Modern cold products depend on refrigeration or ice to maintain them on the street and other vending locations. The earliest cold storage was ice put into insulated boxes, but the ice in summertime had to be kept in large warehouses where they were stored in wintertime. Ice could also be made with refrigeration machinery. Portable refrigeration was developed in the early 1930s and made such vehicles as ice-cream trucks possible. These were run from gasoline engines in the trucks. During most of the 20th century, Good Humor, sold from trucks, was the most famous ice-cream company in North America.

The kind of vessels used to cook street food varies according to the dish itself and its culture of origin. For example, in East and Southeast Asia and anywhere Asian cuisine is made, woks of various sizes are commonly used. Flat griddles are used for tortillas in Mexico and for certain styles of hot dogs in the United States. Among the cooking gear are

- Woks (*hù* or *guō* in Mandarin, *kuali* in Southeast Asia)—across Asia and everywhere Asian cuisine is made
- In India, large flat or concave iron pans called *tawa* are used for shallow frying bread and meat
- Stew pots—pan-African and in Asia for many hot pot dishes
- Frying pans—shallower than woks—are used for sautéing and lighter frying, such as south Chinese dumplings
- Flat griddles—universal for everything from tortillas to hot dogs and hamburgers

- Grills—in many sizes, and fired by wood, charcoal, or gas, these are used for many skewered meat dishes and such vegetables as corn
- Hot boxes—boxes with heating elements or steam vents beneath them to allow heating of such food as buns and sausages
- Fryers—electric or propane-driven deep-fryer boxes that adjust the cooking temperatures of oil in which food is cooked

## Frying

Fried foods are the most popular street foods worldwide. They are sold at all kinds of fairs in North America, where everything from chicken and corn dogs to doughs, batters, candy bars, Twinkies, and even ice creams are fried. Fried foods come in two main forms: pan fried and deep-fried. The first requires only a shallow pan in which a small amount of oil or fat is heated and then used to cook the food. Deep-frying is used to totally immerse a food in hot oil (typically 330–350°F), thus cooking it and crisping the exterior.

Typical fried foods include the ever-popular French fries, or *frites* (Belgium's national street food), *churros* (in Mexico and Latin America), and other such fried sweet doughs and batters as funnel cakes and doughnuts, batter-coated and breaded foods like chicken and hot dogs, and even fried fruit pies and candy bars.

## Open Grilling

Open grills are used the world over to make such foods as *kebabs*—meat and vegetables on skewers—and *satays* in Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. Sausages are a natural for grills in Europe and the Americas. Vegetables are also cooked, often called roasted as with corn and tomatoes, though roasting usually means cooking in an enclosed device.

## Boiling

Large pots of liquids set over heat sources are prevalent in the street-food world. Soups, stews, dumplings, beans, and other vegetables are all cooked this way. A great many African dishes are stews cooked in this manner in the open air as are dumplings made of cassava and other starchy plants.

## Roasting

Roasting can be done in ovens, or in pits dug in the ground, or in the open. Many street foods are prepared by roasting in ovens, and for festivals in many countries, whole animals are cooked in pits. Perhaps the best-known roasted food is *shawarma*—similar to *gyros* and *döner kebabs*—in which cut meats are compacted on a spit and then roasted before an open flame.

## Baking and Toasting

Typically, baking means cooking in an enclosed oven. In some cases, enclosed ovens are used within shops to make such street food as pizza. Mainly, though, street-food baking is done on a heated flat griddle. Flatbreads are commonly made in this way, from corn- and wheat-flour tortillas in Latin America to cheese-filled *gözleme* in Turkey. Sandwiches and nuts are toasted, and even insects are roasted and toasted on flat metal sheets. On the Indian subcontinent, small portable clay ovens called *tandoors* are used to bake breads and meat.

## Steaming

Dumplings and such foods as hot dogs are often steamed. A flat sheet or pan with a perforated bottom is set over boiling water so that steam filters upward. Chinese dumplings such as wheat-flour buns called *bao zi* are steamed in round bamboo trays and served hot.

## Types of Street Food

Street foods appear in many forms, but can be put into several general categories. Governments often arrange them in this way so that regulations can be better made and understood. The basic groupings can be defined in the following ways.

### Single-Ingredient Food

Single-ingredient foods are the simplest kinds of street food. They are one product unadorned or processed, such as grilled chicken, meats, fish, or vegetables. Roasted/grilled corn on the cob is probably the world's most commonly eaten single-ingredient food.

### Combined Ingredients or Compound Foods

Compounded foods are the most common of street food. They are composed of one or more ingredients made of different textures and flavors in a single dish. Condiments on sausages, hamburgers, or tacos are examples. There are several general kinds of these foods.

### Stuffed

Stuffed foods are ingredients that are processed in some way, usually chopped, mixed with seasonings, forced into an outer covering, and then completely encased. A great many street foods fit this category, notably sausages—chopped meats in a gut or artificial casing. Some casings can be made of vegetables or leaves; others use wheat or corn dough.

Cabbage, grape leaves, and such flowers as zucchini are all used to make famous dishes such as *dolma* (Mediterranean stuffed grape leaves), *golubzi* (East European

stuffed cabbage), and *flor de calabasa* (stuffed zucchini flowers in Latin America). Corn or banana leaves are also stuffing casings, the most usual dish being the tamale. Green and red peppers and tomatoes are also stuffed but more often served at festivals rather than as street food.

Corn flour dough is used for tamales, empanadas, and the ubiquitous Latin American *arepa*. Rice flour, sometimes mixed with tapioca starch, appears in almost all *jiao ze* (southern Chinese dumplings) and southeast Asian dumplings. Wheat flour has wider uses, from *bao ze* (northern Chinese steamed dumplings), to Indian *momos* and *samosas*, Ukrainian German American *runzas*, to Cornish pasties, East European *pierogis* and *pirozkis*, and many Latin American and Spanish *empanadas*. Bean and pea flours are used in Indian dumplings (*muthia*).

## Wrapped

Likely the most widely consumed complex foods are wrapped. Here, shells of various breads or vegetable leaves are folded around a filling with tops or sides left open. This technique allows flexibility in adding condiments to the food. Anyone who has loaded mustard, onions, or varieties of ingredients on a hot dog knows the method. So popular is wrapping that a whole category of sandwiches called “wraps” are now staples of North American dining.

Corn-based flatbreads, tortillas, are among the most popular wrappings, used in everything from tacos to enchiladas. Wheat flour is even more universal. The everyday sandwich, eaten worldwide, is basically a wrap, as is any food served on a bun. Flatbreads such as Middle Eastern *lavash* and pita, Indian *naan*, the *chapati*, and *kulcha* serve similar functions. Some breads are yeast-leavened and made in ovens, and others are baked on flat griddles. The Turkish *yufka* is a good example.

## Stews and Soups

One way to serve many people is by extending a food by cooking it in water. Soups and stews of every variety appear in street-food venues and in great many festivals of every sort. They can be made of meats or meats and vegetables or vegetables and starchy tubers. Usually any soup or stew is accompanied by a bread or dumpling (noodles are types of dumplings).

## Beverages

People need something to drink with their food, so individual vendors and stands serving freshly made or industrial soft drinks are common in markets. On the Indian subcontinent, tea stands are ubiquitous, often little more than a single vendor with a small grill, a kettle, a teapot, and cups. In tropical countries, freshly squeezed fruit juices and coconut water are an important source of vitamins and minerals. Aside from beer and wine, alcoholic beverages are not usually supplied by street-food purveyors.

## **Eight Tastiest Street Foods in Europe**

1. St. Petersburg: Fried *pirozhki*
2. Amsterdam: *Kroketten*
3. Berlin: *Currywurst*
4. Bruges: *Frites*
5. Florence: Gelato
6. Paris: Crepes
7. Rome: *Pizza al taglio*
8. Stockholm: Fried herring sandwich

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Tom Meyers, "The Blog," *Huffington Post*, September 13, 2010 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-meyers/the-8-tastiest-street-foo\\_b\\_714856.html#s139260&title=Stockholm\\_Fried\\_Herring](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/tom-meyers/the-8-tastiest-street-foo_b_714856.html#s139260&title=Stockholm_Fried_Herring)

## **Premade Foods**

In the modern industrialized world, plenty of foods sold on streets and from vending machines are made in factories. All of them are compounded foods with chemical preservatives and flavorings. Packaged candies in their considerable profusion are the best examples of industrial snack foods. Small baked cakes, cookies, and crackers are others. The most universal of this category are soft drinks. A good many of them are made by international beverage companies that have spread their brands everywhere. Cola companies are without question the best known.

## **Health and Safety**

Many tourists shy away from eating street food because of its association with various digestive disorders, known variously as "Montezuma's revenge," "Delhi belly," or simply "traveler's diarrhea." These are caused by bacterial contamination, especially from *Shigella sonnei* and *Escherichia coli*. Food is susceptible to contamination at all stages of the food chain. Factors causing contamination include poor food preparation and handling practices, inadequate storage facilities, exposure to flies and rodents, vendors' lack of personal hygiene, and lack of adequate sanitation and garbage disposal facilities.

One of the most critical problems for vendors is the supply of water of acceptable quality and in sufficient quantities for drinking washing, cleaning, and other operations. In tropical countries with high ambient temperatures and humidity, the problems are intensified, especially if the ingredients or the dishes are kept a room

temperature for a long period of time, which turns it into an excellent culture broth in which bacteria thrive. One of the most effective ways of killing dangerous microorganisms is by proper cooking. Serving at or reheating food to 160°F (71°C) may eliminate many of the bacteria.

Because street food plays such an important role in the eating patterns of people in many developing countries, international organizations have been working to develop guidelines for its production and regulation. The two most prominent are the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), both divisions of the United Nations. In 1988, FAO held the world's first expert consultation on street foods in Jakarta, Indonesia, and since then has held many conferences and programs to improve the quality of street food in Africa, Asia, and Latin America by training vendors, teachers, and inspectors in good hygiene and manufacturing practices.

Based on studies in many different countries, FAO has developed the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) method, which uses checklists to identify the hazards at every critical point in the food chain and establish priorities for intervention and control. These critical points vary by product. For example, the main source of hazard for stewed chicken in China was microbial contamination after cooking, whereas for various street foods sold in Kolkata, the main source of contamination was the water used at various stages in the process. WHO and FAO created a document that instructed governments on how to conduct the HACCP analysis.

The WHO's Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies prepared and in some regions adopted a Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street-vended Foods and published a report on essential safety requirements for street-vended foods. WHO has issued *A Guide on Safe Food for Travelers* to ensure the prevention of foodborne diseases at such events as the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa and the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The pamphlet has been translated into French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Croatian, Portuguese, and Arabic and is handed out at some international airports.

## WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food

1. Wash your hands often and always before handling and consuming food.
2. Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked and remains steaming hot. Avoid raw seafood, poultry meat that is still red or has pink juiced, and rare minced meat.
3. Make sure that cooked food is not in contact with raw food that could contaminate it and any uncooked food: exceptions are fruits and vegetables that can be peeled or shelled. However, avoid any fruits and vegetables that have damaged skin.

4. Avoid cooked food that has been held at room temperature for several hours, which means avoiding foods from street vendors if they are not kept hot or refrigerated or on ice.
5. If available, drink bottled water but always check the seal to ensure it has not been tampered with. When the safety of drinking water is doubtful, bring it to a vigorous boil. Other bottled beverages are usually safe to drink.

## Regulations

Street-food regulations vary widely among countries and even among cities within the same country. Some entities have adopted legislation or ordinances to regulate the preparation and sale of food, others have no regulations at all, while in others, the regulations may exist but are not enforced or enforced haphazardly because of indifference or a shortage of inspectors. In some countries, street-food vendors have no legal status, which makes them vulnerable to harassment by officials. In others, licensing is required and enforced. In Singapore, for example, all vendors are licensed, and every vendor is required to be vaccinated against typhoid. North American and European countries all require and enforce regular health inspections.

Although the main purpose of regulations is to promote health and safety, often other factors come into play, such as opposition by the owners of brick-and-mortar restaurants who fear the competition and by real estate interests who want to use the valuable urban space occupied by vendors. One common rule is that no mobile food vehicle can be within 200 feet of a fixed restaurant. There are also concerns about vehicle and pedestrian traffic congestion. Moreover, street food is becoming an important tourist attraction throughout the world, but since some tourists may be squeamish about buying food from the street, cities have created food courts with clean facilities and tables and chairs.

Vendors usually look at regulations as onerous because they restrict their ability to make a living. Most street vendors stand at the bottom of the economic scale, so every dollar makes a big difference in their lives. In such cities as New York, where a cart is allowed to operate can make the difference in a vendor's income, and there is competition for the best spots that the police will allow. Street vendors have formed organization in cities across North America, from Toronto to New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles under the banner of social justice for the small entrepreneur and working people. They have been effective in changing some laws and certainly public attitudes toward street food. In India, street vendors have formed the Street Vendors Association of India to protect their interests, make available information about best practices and legal issues, and find "long-lasting and sustainable solutions to the problems faced by street vendors."

Rules and regulations governing street food focus on several aspects:

- Authorization and/or licensing to conduct the production and sale of street food
- Composition and presentation of food products
- Offenses and penalties
- Institutions and officials responsible for food surveillance and control

One approach has been to move vendors off the streets into sanitary—some would say sanitized—food courts with seating facilities, clean water, disposal, and other amenities. The entrepreneurs are registered and have premises allocated with access to telephone, water, and electricity and trained in community health practices. This has occurred in many Asian cities, including Singapore, Bangkok, Guangdong, Jakarta, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. In other cities including Quito, Ecuador, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, and Cebu City in the Philippines, urban authorities have developed programs to improve food quality and safety and find appropriate locations.

Elsewhere, there has been a more halfhearted effort. In India, many cities had restrictions on street-food vendors, but they were not enforced either through neglect or corruption in the form of bribes to the police. In 2007, prior to the Asian Games, the Delhi city government tried to enforce existing legislation by banning the preparation of food at street stands, a move supported by India's High Court. However, the order proved unenforceable and has not been implemented.

In North America, some cities, notably Chicago, Toronto, and Montreal, have stringent regulations on food trucks and street vendors, whereas others, notably Seattle, Washington, Portland, Oregon, and Austin, Texas, are famous for their bustling food truck scenes.

Despite, or maybe because of, regulations and modernization in cities and countries across the globe, street food is among the fastest growing food industries. People want inexpensive meals and snacks made by cooks who use fresh ingredients to make delectable and sometime hearty dishes. In the underdeveloped world, street food is a necessity. In the developed world, sampling dishes from varieties of culinary traditions that use locally sourced ingredients provides gustatory adventures that are hard to replicate in restaurants or at home. Perhaps more than anything else, street food gives people a sense of community—among sellers and buyers in the open air among crowds—that is hard to replicate anywhere else. In cities everywhere, street food is at the core of peoples' common existence and identity.



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# A

## Afghanistan

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The diversity of Afghanistan's climate, geography, ethnicity, and agriculture has given rise to a rich and varied street-food culture. A landlocked country, Afghanistan is situated at the crossroads of four major cultural areas: the Middle East, Central Asia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Far East. Afghanistan played a vital role linking East and West along the ancient Silk Road, where ideas, religion, trade, foods, and plants were exchanged.

Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries in the world, has had a turbulent history, which continues to the present day. It has an estimated population of between 28 and 33 million, including 4 million in the capital Kabul. The population is a mosaic of ethnic groups, the main ones being Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, and Baloch. While the majority (99%) are Muslims, there are small pockets of Hindus and Sikhs. Many Afghans who fled to Iran, Pakistan, and India during the Soviet occupation and the subsequent Taliban era have returned home and brought back new dishes and ways of cooking.

Afghans love to snack, especially on outings, picnics, special holidays, and feast days or on their way home from work. Despite the ongoing security situation, *chaikhana*, kebab stalls, food stalls, and street vendors are still doing a thriving trade. The food is always prepared and sold by men.

*Chaikhana* (teahouses), located throughout the country, are establishments where weary travelers can be refreshed after long and dusty journeys. *Chaikhana* are also meeting places where local men meet to exchange gossip and news over tea from a constantly boiling samovar. Some serve such simple food as the traditional teapot soup (*sherwa-e-chainaki*), a preparation of lamb, onions, and cilantro simmered in a teapot.

Kebab stalls can be found in the major towns and cities. Charikar, a town north of Kabul, is famous for its *sikh kebab*, while Jalalabad in the east is known for its *chaplī kebab*. Kebab stalls (*dukan-e-kebabī*) are very basic. Some have rickety chairs and tables and they sell soft drinks, and some are attached or next door to a *chaikhana*, while others are just a stall where customers eat the tasty, succulent kebabs standing around the stall or walking along the street. The *kebabī* (stallholder) stands behind his *manqal* (charcoal brazier), wafting his *pakka* (kebab fan) over the coals to keep them glowing and turning the skewered kebabs over from time to

time. He often has an assistant, usually a young boy learning the trade, who fans the charcoal from the front.

All the major cities (Kabul, Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, Kandahar, Jalalabad) and some small towns have food stalls and street vendors. They position themselves outside schools, shopping centers, cinemas, government buildings (although not recently because of the potential of suicide bombers), and in parks and bazaars, such as Kabul's Mandawi food market. Street-food stalls can also be found at popular picnic spots and religious sites and shrines.

The old-style street vendors, called *tabang wala*, have very basic equipment. They carry their wares on a large, flat, round wooden tray (*tabang*) and stake their claim to a particular street corner or patch. In recent years, the old-style *tabang wala* have been disappearing. Today, most street vendors have a more elaborate and better equipped mobile kiosk on wheels with a canopy and usually facilities for frying food on the spot. The type of food sold often depends on the region and the time of the year. A traditional street food is *shour nakhod*, chickpeas doused with a mint and vinegar dressing and served with vibrantly colored chutneys. The same dressing and chutneys are also an accompaniment to cooked red kidney beans or boiled sliced potatoes.

A recent development is *chaat*, a combination of boiled potatoes, kidney beans, and chickpeas sprinkled with pomegranate seeds and *chaat* spice powder, introduced by refugees returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan and India. Other snacks are *sambosa*, stuffed pastries, similar to Indian samosas, with a minced meat and pea filling subtly spiced with cumin and cilantro and a little chopped green chili, and *pakora*, made from such vegetables as sliced par-boiled potatoes, cauliflower sprigs, onion rings, or sliced eggplants dipped into a chickpea flour batter and deep-fried. They are usually served with a mint or coriander chutney. Corn on the cob is roasted over a charcoal brazier and sprinkled with salt. Noodle dishes such as *mantu* and *aush* are also popular.

Street vendors are particularly active on such religious or festive days as *Eid* or *Nauroz* (the Persian/Afghan New Year on the first day of spring) when children and grown-ups go out for picnics or fly their kites. In the crisp spring air, people enjoy a plateful of steaming hot and spicy *pilau-e-tolaki*, or "weighed" *pilau*, so called because the *tabang wala* weighs out the *pilau* on scales, using stones that weigh one-quarter or half a pound. *Pilau* is rice cooked in stock with meat or vegetables with spices added and, in Afghanistan, often garnished with carrots, nuts, and raisins. Children buy roasted chickpeas, pine nuts, raisins, or sugared almonds served in cone-shaped paper bags. *Khasta-e-shireen* is a kind of nut brittle made by pouring caramel over almond or apricot kernels and formed in large, round plate-like shapes. Other sweet treats include *halwa-e-swanak*, a nut brittle made with pistachios or walnuts. *Halwa-e-marghzi* is a rather odd-looking sweet, made with a milk, sugar, and walnut syrup. It is very

viscous and is stretched and shaken in the air from a wooden pole until it sets hard.

Another common sight in the bazaars in spring is *kishmish panir*—balls of white cheese, known as *panir-e-khom*, displayed on a bed of green vine leaves. The fresh cheese, brought to the market by people from the mountains or outlying districts, is sold with red raisins (*kishmish surkh*).

In summer and autumn, *kishmish ab*, made of raisins soaked in water and served in a small bowl or glass, makes a refreshing drink. *Khakshir* is an herbal drink made from the seeds of *Sisymbrium irio*, also known as London rocket. The seeds are soaked in water with sugar for a few hours and then drunk, preferably over ice. *Khakshir* has long been valued as a medicine, especially for asthma and detoxifying the liver, but today it is sold by street vendors as a refreshment. Juices and sherbets are made from such fruits or vegetables as carrots, pomegranates, and cherries. *Ab-e-kista* is a juice made from dried apricots with the stone removed reconstituted in water. *Gholeng* is a similar drink made with a smaller variety of apricot, but the stone is not removed. *Ab-e-zafaran* is made by adding water to saffron with a little sugar. Lemon juice is also popular and is sweetened with sugar or sometimes salt. A juice is also made from sugarcane.

Such fruits as mango and banana are made into a kind of milk shake or smoothie. The fruit is whizzed up in a processor with almonds and milk or yogurt. Other popular drinks are *dogh* (a yoghurt drink flavored with mint and often with grated or small pieces of cucumber) similar to the *ayran* of the Middle East. Summer is also the time for *sheer yakh* (ice cream) or *faluda*.

During Jeshyn, an autumn festival celebrating Afghan independence, street vendors sell the snacks described earlier as well as such seasonal fruits as slices of melon and watermelon, grapes, peaches, and nectarines.

Specialty food shops or permanent stalls serve specific dishes. In winter, *hal-eem* (a cereal and meat porridge served with melted ghee or oil and sprinkled with ground cinnamon, cardamom, and sugar) is bought by men early in the morning, especially on Fridays after going to the *hamam* (public baths). They take it home to their families for breakfast. *Sherwa-e-cala pacha* is another “takeaway” breakfast dish, a hearty and warming soup made from sheep’s head and feet. *Cala pilau*, a rice dish made with the head of a sheep, is another popular takeaway. Winter is also the time for deep-fried local and imported fish and *jelabi*, an unusual combination. *Jelabi* is a sweet composed of whorls of batter, deep-fried and soaked in syrup.

Food hygiene and safety are a major concern for anyone eating outside the home. Despite the existence of a Department of Hygiene in the Ministry of Health, food hygiene is fairly basic, and one eats street food at one’s own risk. The cleanliness of some of the implements and serving plates is often doubtful. Food served on naan or on paper plates poses less risk. Stomach problems and illnesses are endemic



*Jelabi* is a sweet composed of whorls of batter, deep fried and soaked in syrup, and is popular in Afghanistan. In the wintertime, it is eaten with fried fish—an unusual combination. (Courtesy of Helen Saberi)

in Afghanistan. However, any food that is fried at a high temperature and served immediately is less risky than food that has been prepared earlier.

## Major Street Foods

### Kebabs

The term *kebab* can describe any type of meat (except pork, which is forbidden to Muslims) grilled, barbecued, cooked in the oven, or fried. It can range from a whole baby lamb baked in a *tandoor* to ground meat formed into patties or sausage shapes.

The most common kebabs sold at stalls are *tikka* or *sikh* kebabs. Small cubes of lamb interspersed with fat called *dumba* from the tail of the fat-tailed sheep are threaded on skewers (*sikh*) and grilled over charcoal. The cooked kebabs are served on top of bread: either naan, a leavened, baked wheat bread, *lawausha* (a larger, thinner type of naan), or chapati, an unleavened wheat bread cooked on a griddle. Crushed dried sour grapes (*ghora*), salt, and red pepper are sprinkled over the kebabs. For “takeaway,” the crushed grapes and pepper are placed in little cone-shaped paper bags and the kebabs wrapped in the *lawausha* bread. If the kebabs are “eaten in” at the stall, they may be served with a salad of sliced onions and tomatoes with cilantro and some lemon or *norinj* (Seville orange) wedges as a garnish.

*Kofta* or *qima* kebabs are made with minced meat formed into sausage shapes, threaded on skewers and cooked over charcoal. *Karayi* kebab can be made from either *kofta* kebab or *sikh* kebab. The kebabs are removed from the skewers and placed in a round metal pan called a *karayi* with a little oil and fried quickly for a few seconds. Eggs are broken over the top and fried until cooked, sprinkled with salt and pepper and served straight from the pan.

*Shinwari*, lamb chop kebabs (named after the Shinwari, one of the large Pashtun tribes of the North West Frontier), were once a favorite in the old town of Kabul. (A similar kebab, called *qaburgha*, is sometimes made from ribs of veal and is called *pushti* kebab by Pashtuns especially in Kandahar and Herat, two cities renowned for this type of kebab.) The old town of Kabul was also famous for kebabs made with liver (*jigar*), kidney (*gourda*), and lambs' testicles (*kebab-e-kalpura*), believed to be an aphrodisiac. Some vendors make *chopan kebab*, named after shepherds (*chopan*) who rubbed chunks of lamb on the bone with plenty of salt, skewer the meat on twigs or small branches, and roast them over fire while watching their flocks. A specialty of Jalalabad is fried *chapli* kebab, which can be very "hot" and consists of minced meat, lots of *gandana* (a type of Chinese chive), scallions, cilantro, and plenty of green chilies. *Chapli* means sandal in Dari, which this kebab resembles. Chicken kebab, previously an expensive commodity, has become popular. The legs, thighs, wings, or breasts are marinated and then fried in a pan over charcoal or gas burners.

## Noodle Dishes

Noodle dishes come from northern Afghanistan and reflect the influence of Central Asia. *Aush* is a wheat-flour noodle soup to which chickpeas, red kidney beans, or other vegetables are added. Strained yogurt (*chaka*) or reconstituted *quroot* (dried yogurt) is stirred in, and the entire mixture is flavored with garlic, mint, and chili pepper. A dollop of minced meat cooked in an onion and tomato sauce is often added on top. *Aush-e-asli* are boiled wheat noodles to which are added meatballs cooked in a tomato sauce.

*Mantu* is a traditional Uzbek dish. Noodle-type wheat dough is stuffed with finely chopped lamb and onion and subtly spiced with finely chopped green chili, black pepper, and cumin, and steamed. The "dumplings" are served with strained yoghurt and sprinkled with chopped fresh cilantro. Some are served with a carrot *qorma*.

## Boulanee

*Boulanee* is a stuffed fried pastry. Fillings may include squash, spinach, and mung beans, but the most popular ones are filled with chopped *gandana* or mashed potato

and scallions. They are usually made in a half-moon shape and served with chutney.

## Shour Nakhod

*Shour* means salty and *nakhod* are chickpeas. Chickpeas are simmered slowly in plenty of water over several hours, then mounded and patted together to resemble a cake on a large platter. The vendor takes a small plate and expertly “cuts” a portion of the chickpeas, without collapsing the mound, places it in a small bowl, and sprinkles generous amounts of mint and vinegar dressing on top. Chutney is served as an accompaniment.

## Other Street Foods

### Ice Cream

*Sheer yakh* means frozen milk in Dari (the Persian dialect spoken in Afghanistan). Traditionally, ice cream is a springtime or summer treat sold by the *sheer yakh ferosh* (ice cream seller) who makes it in a large tub-like metal cylinder with a smaller cylinder or bucket inside. The outer cylinder, which is stationary, is filled with salt and snow. The inner cylinder is filled with milk, sugar, and flavorings such as rosewater and cardamom. Sometimes *sahlab* (salep), a fine white powder obtained from the dried root tubers of orchids, is added to give a more elastic and smooth texture. The ice cream is rotated by hand; from time to time, the ice-cream maker inserts a long spoon-like pole to mix the ice cream from bottom to top. The rotation continues until the ice cream is frozen and has a creamy texture. Chopped pistachios or almonds are often sprinkled on top.

### Ice and Snow

In his book *An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul* (1842), Mountstuart Elphinstone wrote of *faluda*:

Ice, or rather snow, is to be had in Caubul, during the summer, for a mere trifle. . . . A favourite food at that season is fulodeh, a jelly strained from boiled wheat, and eaten with the expressed juice of fruits and ice, to which cream also is sometimes added.

Variations are found in Iran, India, Pakistan, and throughout West Asia. In Afghanistan, falooda is made by soaking whole wheat grains and grinding them with

water to yield a milky liquid called *nishaste*. It is cooked to make a paste that is forced through a kind of colander or pasta machine into iced water where tiny rice-like grains or small vermicelli are formed. They are called *jhala*, which means hailstones. The *jhala* may be served with crushed ice and topped with a fruit sherbet or syrup, or are used as a topping for ice cream, *qymaq* (clotted cream), or *firni*, a milk pudding flavored and thickened with salep. All are topped with sprinkling of rosewater and chopped pistachio nuts.

Huge blocks of packed snow are “mined” from the slopes of the Hindu Kush and taken in large blocks in trucks to Kabul, where they are used for making ice cream and iced sherbets and for cooling drinks. A traditional drink called *shireen barf* (sweet snow) is made by pouring multicolored syrups, often flavored with rosewater, over shaved snow. *Sheer barf* (milk snow) is milk mixed with shavings of snow and topped with a similar syrup.

*Sheer yakh qalebi* is another traditional ice cream made in cone-shaped metal molds. The same ice-cream mixture is placed into these molds that are sealed with dough before freezing.

Today two innovative companies are producing factory-made ice creams that are sold from modern wheeled carts with covers. Some are served in cone-shaped wafers (*sheer yakh qalebi*). Ice cream is sold on a flat wooden stick and in a plastic container with a wooden spoon. This has led to the demise of “old-style” ice creams and *faluda*, although it is still served in the Old City and some upmarket ice-cream parlors.

*Helen Saberi*

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## Andean South America (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile)

The countries on the west coast of South America—Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Chile—are situated between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes Mountains, the longest mountain range in the world (4,300 miles) and the highest mountain range outside of Asia. This region was home to many indigenous civilizations, the last of which, the Incas, arose in the early 13th century in the highlands of Peru and



conquered much of western South America between 1438 and 1533. In the latter year, the Inca Empire was conquered by the Spanish, who extended their rule over much of South America, with their capital in Lima.

The region has a wide variety of climates and soils and an extremely rich biodiversity. The Incas developed a sophisticated system of agriculture based on terracing, storage, and distribution of foods. Their dietary staples were maize and quinoa, supplemented by potatoes, yucca, sweet potato, and the *aji* chili pepper. Protein came from guinea pigs, llama, and fish and seafood. The Spanish introduced crops from other parts of their vast empire in Asia and Europe, including bananas, cattle, pigs, chickens, wheat, and rice. Slaves from Africa and immigrants from Asia, Europe, and other parts of South America later added their own ingredients and dishes to this fabulous culinary stew.

The region has an especially lively street-food life thanks to deep-rooted traditions of making, selling, and serving food outside the home. Some dishes are common to the entire region, including empanadas, ceviche, and tamales (called *humitas*), but others are regional or local specialties.

## **Colombia**

Located in the northwestern corner of South America, Colombia is bordered by five countries, the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea. It is a county of considerable topographic and climatic diversity, all of which affect local foods. Mountains run along the west side of the country down into Ecuador and Peru, and rivers cut through much of Colombia. The west coast is flatter with a very warm climate. Fishing and commerce through the main port of Cartagena are located here. As the land rises toward the mountains, the temperature moderates, allowing Colombia's famous coffee to be produced on small farms and large plantations. Across the mountain range with its cool temperatures lie the vast Amazonian jungles that Colombia has in common with Brazil and the *Llanos* (plains) that it shares along its long border with Venezuela. Colombia produces bananas—it is the world's third largest exporter—corn, yucca, rice, wheat, potatoes, and cattle. All are staples of the Colombian diet.

Colombia has a variety of ethnicities in its population. The majority are of mixed European and indigenous descent, but as a partly Caribbean country, there is a minority of people of African or mixed African heritage. Colombia's street food reflects all these influences: Spanish, indigenous, and African. Colombia is also regional so that street food in the coastal city of Cartagena might differ from the capital located in the highlands, Bogota. Nonetheless, there are universal dishes.

## Major Street Foods

### *Arepas*

Like neighboring Venezuela, thick-fried corn cakes that are split and filled are the standard street fare. In Cartagena, they tend to be flaky made with butter and often filled with melted cheese. In Bogota, they are drier and filled with cooked meats of various kinds with sauces.

### *Empanadas*

Filled savory pastries, empanadas are standard street food across Latin America. Colombian versions often use corn flour instead of the usual wheat flour. They come with many fillings, often meat and potatoes or cheese, and can be toasted on a griddle or fried.

### *Perros Calientes (Hot Dogs)*

The American hot dog is very popular in the countries of northern South America. In Colombia they are usually grilled or steamed, put on large buns and then loaded with mustard, ketchup-like sauces, tomatoes, beans, cheese, chopped cabbage or lettuce, pickles, bacon, and other toppings. They are literally meals on buns.

### *Fruit*

Fruit vendors are everywhere in cities, towns, and along roadsides. Various kinds of bananas, of course, are common as are pineapples, melons, papaya, *carambola* (star fruit), mango, guava, and others and are peeled or cut into fancy shapes and sold from carts. The Caribbean region is particularly rich in tropical fruits eaten as street food. Young coconut is also popular. As a drink, one end is cut open, a straw placed in it, and the milk consumed. It can also be cut into chunks and eaten out of hand.

### *Juices*

Fruit juice stands are ubiquitous. Various types of fruit are squeezed with hand-operated presses directly into individual glasses. Juices can also be blended, sometimes with milk, into frothy drinks. One special Colombian drink is called *avena* (oats). Cooked oats are mixed with milk, sugar, and cinnamon and heated. It is served warm and often with rice. *Limonada* (lemonade) is made from local limes that are mixed with lots of sugar to make a super sweet, but refreshing, drink.

## Other Street Foods

In the Caribbean region, street stands sell *Ceviche*: fish that is cut up, placed in a container with chopped onions, garlic, and herbs, and then covered in lemon juice. Within a few hours, the juice cooks the fish, and it is ready for eating. It is usually served with a pink sauce made of ketchup and mayonnaise.

## Candies

Columbians love sweets. Candy stalls and vendors selling it from baskets are common sights in cities, towns, and at public events. *Dulce de leche* or *Coco de leche*—milk caramels, plain or with coconut—are especially liked. Filled hard candies and many others made from plain sugar or with fruits such as tamarind are also very popular.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## Ecuador

A country in western South America that straddles the equator (hence its name), the Republic of Ecuador is bordered by Colombia to the north, Peru to the south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west. The region was home to many ancient cultures, the last of which was conquered by the Incas in 1463. They were subsequently defeated and ruled by the Spanish from whom Ecuador won its independence in 1809. A quarter of Ecuador's population are indigenous Amerindians belonging to a number of groups; two-thirds are of mixed Spanish and Native American heritage.

Indigenous starchy staples include potatoes, which were domesticated in the Andes, corn, quinoa, and cassava, as well as bananas and plantains, which originated in Asia and are now a major Ecuadorian export. As in Peru, guinea pig is a popular meat. The country, especially its capital Quito and its central market, has a lively street-food scene that features such dishes as empanadas and shawarma found in other countries as well as some uniquely Ecuadorian dishes.

## Major Street Foods

### **Potatoes**

*Llapingachos*, which originated in the city of Ambata in the central Andes but are now popular nationwide, are balls of mashed boiled potatoes filled with cheese, then flattened and cooked on a griddle. They are served with a peanut sauce and sausage, slices of roasted suckling pig, or a fried egg on the side. *Papas con cuero*, often sold at football games, are small potatoes served in a stew with bits of pork skin and fat.

### **Bananas**

Slices of starchy plantain are fried and eaten as a popular snack, called *chifles*. *Bolon de verde* are dumplings made by frying green plantains, mashing them into dough, filling them with cheese or pork, and then frying them again until crispy.

### **Ceviche**

In Ecuador, unlike in Peru, the seafood in ceviche is cooked briefly before marination, a policy adopted after a cholera outbreak in the early 1990s. Shrimp ceviche served with a tomato sauce is especially popular. *Ceviche de chochos* is a vegetarian version made with broad beans, onions, tomatoes, cilantro, limes, oranges, and tomato sauce and served with a corn tostado, *chifles*, avocados, and hot sauce.

### **Corn**

Many Ecuadorian street vendors sell grilled corn served with a cheese and cilantro sauce. The Andean version of Mexican tamales, *humitas*, are packages of ground fresh corn mixed with milk and fat, wrapped in corn husks, and steamed. Served with a mild chili sauce, they are popular breakfast dishes. In Chile, basil leaves are added to the corn filling. To make tortillas, *de maiz con queso* (corn tortillas with cheese), a small ball made from corn flour and water is stuffed with a pinch of grated fresh cheese, then flattened into a patty and fried until crisp.

### **Mote Con Chicharrón (Hominy with Pork Skin)**

A specialty of Quito, the capital, is *mote con chicharrón*. It is usually sold by women walking around with a cook-pot containing *mote*, or hominy (corn kernels soaked in an alkali solution) and *chicharrón*, or fried pork rind. It is sold in little plastic bags, with the *mote* on the bottom and the *chicharrón* on the top.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Peru

The third largest country in South America, the Republic of Peru, extends from the Pacific Ocean to the Brazilian jungle, with borders on Ecuador and Colombia on the north, Bolivia on the southeast, and Chile to the south. Although situated near the equator, Peru has enormous climatic and geographical diversity. Potatoes play an important role in the diet: more than 3,000 varieties are produced. A key ingredient in the local *salsa criolla* is the *aji* chili pepper—a mild red pepper with a smoky fruity taste. A popular meat is the guinea pig (*cuy*)—more than 65 million are consumed in Peru each year—fried or roasted with rice and corn on the side.

Peru was home to many ancient cultures, the most recent being the Inca Empire, which existed for 100 years before being conquered by the Spanish in 1532. Starting in the 16th century, African slaves were brought to work in construction and domestic service. The 19th century saw the arrival of Chinese, Japanese, and European immigrants. Today about two-thirds of Peru's 30 million people are Amerindian or Mestizo (mixed European and Indian). This melting pot of cultures and traditions has created one of the most vibrant culinary cultures in South America.



Tamales being sold in a street market in Lima, Peru. (Courtesy of Bruce Kraig)

### Guinea Pigs as Delicacy

Guinea pigs play such an important role in Andean culture and cuisine that an 18th-century painting even shows Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper about to eat a platter of guinea pig instead of the traditional lamb. The painting

by Marcos Zapata hangs in the cathedral in Cuzco, Peru. Guinea pig was a sacrificial animal in Inca agricultural festivals, and incorporating it into Christian symbolism was part of the Spanish strategy of conversion.

Street vendors, many of them women, have been plying their trade in the plazas of Peru's capital Lima since the 16th century. Many famous Peruvian dishes, such as *anticuchos* and *chica morada*, were first sold on the streets, and today some are incorporated into what is known as *Nova Andino*, or New Andean, cuisine. Vendors park their carts at markets, bus stops, or places where manual workers congregate and serve either single dishes or sometimes entire meals. Cities are dotted with bakeries and mobile carts selling pastries.

## Major Street Foods

### Anticuchos

Sold at food stalls called *anticucheras*, this Peruvian version of kebabs has become popular throughout South America. Small pieces of meat marinated in vinegar and spices (including garlic, cumin, and *aji* pepper) are roasted on skewers, often with a boiled potato or piece of bread. Dating back to Inca times, *anticuchos* were originally made with llama meat and, later, starting with the Spanish, beef, especially the heart. Today they are made from various cuts of beef and sometimes chicken. A standard accompaniment is a sauce made from garlic, onion, vinegar, lemon juice, and beer.

### Ceviche

Ceviche—fresh raw fish or seafood marinated in citrus juice—is probably the most emblematic Peruvian dish; it even has its own national holiday! There are an estimated 11,000 cevicherias—from market stalls to gourmet restaurants—in Lima alone. Ceviche stalls and shacks are especially common near fish markets or along beaches.

The citric acid in the lime or lemon denatures the protein in the fish, which has the same effect as cooking. Some historians say that ceviche dish originated in Peru 200 years ago when local coastal people marinated fish in fermented passion fruit juice.

In a standard Lima version, fish, often sole, flounder, or sea bass, is marinated in fresh lime or bitter orange, onions, *aji* chilies, salt, and pepper and served with roasted corn, a seaweed called *yuyo*, and cooked sweet potato. Often a small glass of the *piquante* marinade, called *leche de tigre*, or tiger milk, is served as an aperitif. Other ingredients include black clams, mixed fish and seafood, octopus, crayfish, black conch, even duck, and mushrooms. In a modern Japanese-Peruvian version called *tardito*, the fish is sliced into paper-thin slices.

The Spanish took ceviche to other parts of their empire, including Mexico, Central America, Ecuador, Chile, and Spain, all of which have their own variations.

### ***Butifarra***

This popular sandwich is made from slices of *jamon del pais* in a roll of French bread topped with *salsa criolla*, mayonnaise, and lettuce. *Jamon del pais* is a local ham or pork loin seasoned with *aji* chili peppers, garlic, vinegar, and spices and served with the omnipresent *salsa criolla*, a spicy blend of thinly sliced onions, *aji* chilies, lime juice, and cilantro leaves.

### ***Empanadas***

Introduced by the Spanish, empanadas became a popular breakfast dish in Peru. The most popular filling is ground beef, but chicken and cheese are also used. Often hard-boiled egg, onions, olives, and raisins are added to the filling. The dough is usually sprinkled with icing sugar, and the empanadas are always topped off with a dash of fresh lime juice.

### ***Cereals***

A popular breakfast dish is made from quinoa, a highly nutritious indigenous grain boiled with apples and mixed with hot milk. Another cereal is made from *maca*, a plant that grows in the Andes, which is mashed and boiled to produce a sweet, thick liquid mixed with milk. They are usually sold by the same vendor and sometimes served with bread or cake.

### ***Potatoes***

Potatoes, native to Peru, are a staple of the Peruvian diet. *Papa rellena* is a dish of ground meat, egg, and vegetables coated with mashed potatoes and fried. Another popular dish, especially along the coast, is *causa*—mashed potatoes flavored with lime juice, onion, and chili and layered with such ingredients as avocado,

chicken, canned tuna, or shellfish. It is served cold with hard-boiled eggs and olives. French-fried potatoes are a standard accompaniment to many items, such as *salchipapa*—sliced sausage that is mixed together with the fries and served with ketchup or mayonnaise.

### **Drinks**

*Chicha morada* is a sweet beverage made by boiling local purple corn with pineapple, cinnamon, clove, and sugar. Sold in the evenings, *emoliente* is a traditional herbal drink made from roasted barley, various medicinal herbs, sugar, and lime. The actual ingredients vary by region and family. The drink is usually served hot. One of the most popular drinks is Inca Kola, a yellow-colored sweet soda flavored with lemon verbena.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## **Chile**

The Republic of Chile occupies a narrow 2,600-mile strip along the west coast of South America between the Pacific Ocean and the Andes. It is a country of enormous geographic extremes, including the Atacama desert, the fertile Central Valley where Chilean wines are produced, and the glaciers of Patagonia. About 85 percent of Chile's 16 million people live in the Central Valley, and almost a third of them reside in the capital Santiago. The country's oldest cooking traditions come from the Incas, who ruled north and central Chile, and the Mapuche, who lived in south central Chile. The Spanish ruled the country until 1818 when Chile won its independence. The 19th century saw the arrival of immigrants from Spain, France, Italy, Great Britain, and other European countries and, more recently, from neighboring countries in South America. All these groups contributed their eating habits and some foods to Chilean cuisine.

Not surprisingly, in view of its long coastline, seafood plays a central role in Chilean cuisine, which has its own versions of ceviche made with sea bass (Patagonian toothfish), lime, grapefruit juice, and cilantro. Beef is imported from Argentina, but pigs and sheep are raised here. Chilean cuisine is generally quite mild: although *ají* is a common ingredient, it is used in small amounts. A popular sauce



in restaurants and on street stalls is *salsa pebre* made from chopped garlic, chilies, onions, cilantro, salt, oregano, vinegar or lemon juice, and tomatoes.

Street food is regularly found in open fairs, stadiums, and streets throughout Chile. Street carts provide an essential part of the diet for many Chileans, especially university students. Carts are either parked in fixed locations or moved throughout the city in search of customers.

## Major Street Foods

### Sanguche de Potito

When Chile's first railroad was built from Santiago to Valparaiso in 1851, the early travelers had to eat whatever the white-gowned salespeople with their wickerwork baskets offered at the train stations. The food had to be fast and practical to prepare, easy to eat, and delicious. The result was the "traveling sandwich," prepared with a round, flat, unleavened loaf cooked directly over the fire or embers (*tortilla de rescoldo*), cheese, and ham. Different versions were created, and in the mid-1930s, the *sanguche de potito* was born. Potito means "backside," and the name came because of the meat, fried beef or pork intestines or the terminal end of the animal's rectum. The sandwich was served with a sausage and onion and *salsa pebre*. Today these sandwiches are sold at stadiums or public events and are especially popular in Santiago.

### Sopaipillas (*Pumpkin Fritters*)

A *sopaipilla* is a fried pastry traditionally made from leavened wheat dough or a mixture of wheat and corn flour and shortening or butter. It is traditionally made and eaten during cold or rainy weather. In central Chile, boiled pumpkin called *zapallo* is added to the dough. After rising, the dough is rolled out and cut into circular, square, or triangular shapes that are then deep-fried in oil. The frying causes the shapes to puff up, forming a hollow pocket in the center. If eaten as a pastry, *sopaipillas* can be dipped in *chancaca*, a sweet syrupy sauce made of brown sugar, orange zest, hone, and cinnamon. In warmer weather and in southern Chile, they are often served with *manjar*, a thick caramel custard, ketchup, and mustard, or *salsa pebre*.

### Mote con Huesillos (*Poached Dried Peaches and Puffed Wheat Drink*)

*Mote con huesillo* is as Chilean as the *huaso* (the proud horseman), and its preparation can be traced back to the pre-Columbus native populations. It is a sweet, clear, nonalcoholic drink made from with dried peaches (*huesillo*) cooked in sugar

or honey, water, and cinnamon, mixed with fresh cooked husked wheat (*mote*). The sugar is caramelized to give the drink a rich orange color. The drink is served chilled, in a tall glass with a long spoon for easy serving. Occasionally, it is served with dried prunes.

### ***Empanadas***

Chilean empanadas can have a wide range of fillings, but three types are the most popular. One is baked and filled with *pino*, a mixture of beef, onions, raisins, black olives, and a hard-boiled egg. The second is filled with seafood and fried. The third kind contains cheese and may be baked or fried. There are many variations on these basic types: for example, *pino* can be made without raisins and olives or all kinds of seafood may be used, such as mussels, crab, prawns, or *locos* (similar to abalone), or shrimp may be mixed with the cheese. Chilean empanadas are considerably larger than Argentinian empanadas, so that usually one is enough for a meal.

### ***Churro***

The dessert staple of Chilean street food, *churro*, is basically long thin pieces of ridged dough that are deep-fried and coated with sugar, sometimes both granulated and powdered. They are sold plain or filled with *manjar*. They are best served very hot.

*Jorge Pérez*

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## **Arabian Peninsula**

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The Gulf States occupy the Saudi Arabian peninsula, which is bordered by the Red Sea on the west, the Indian Ocean on the South, and the Persian Gulf (also called the Arabian Gulf) on the east. They comprise Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, and Yemen.

Until the latter part of the 20th century, the Gulf States had small populations concentrated in trading ports and villages with nomadic tribes making use of the arid inland areas. The social structure was built on family and tribal lines, and the religion was Islam. Charismatic tribal leaders headed small independent nation

states. The principal occupations were trade within the Gulf and across the Indian Ocean; pearl diving and fishing; cultivation of oasis date orchards; and animal husbandry. The national food culture is derived from a frugal but rich heritage. It is complex and based on locally resourced ingredients with some significant imports such as rice.

As the century advanced, exploitation of oil resources dramatically changed the states' economies, defined political boundaries, and brought large influxes of workers from around the world. They in turn brought their food cultures.

The Arabian Gulf countries do not embrace the street-food format of on-street vendors with barrows or food stands seen elsewhere in the world. These concepts do not have a place in their modern planned cities, which are focused on car transport, not walking. Even in the traditional souks (markets), the foods on sale are predominantly ingredients with a few prepared foods.

In the past, the concept of selling prepared food would have been unthinkable to a nation. Their society was close knit with strong social bonds through the family and tribal affiliations. Their hospitality tradition required food to be freely provided to any guest. Homes ranged from coral stone palaces in the ports to goat hair tents in the interior. All had a hospitality area, the majlis, where guests could be entertained with conversation, some dates or small snacks, and coffee or tea.

The concept of selling food came with the commercialization of the countries, the change to modern city living, and a burgeoning population with wealth to enjoy.

Traditional foods and cookery are being challenged by the diverse cultures of the immigrant population combined with modern food sourcing, processing, and marketing. The incoming cultures have brought some of their street food with them, but it does not have the opportunity to be sold on the street and has instead been assimilated into the cafe and restaurant environment. Local government maintains strict controls on the streetscape, and within the cities, the itinerant vendor is not tolerated.

Traditional and imported foods do have a place in the cultural and shopping festivals that have become a Gulf leisure industry. At these events, a pastiche of street food from many traditions is made available, including national foods. Traditional local breads, khamir, jabeeb, and logaimat, are prepared to sample alongside such incoming food as *murtabak* in a context that mimics street food.

## Major Street Foods

### Shawarma

The need for street sustenance on the move is provided by the sale of prepared food in a snack form on the street front, analogous to the modern Western culture of takeaway food. The shawarma was adopted as the principal street-food snack and is the mainstay of the snack food trade in the Gulf States. It is an import from

a pan-Middle east tradition that now spans from Turkey to the Gulf States. It is a meat sandwich made on demand from freshly prepared ingredients. Despite competition from hamburgers and fried chicken takeaways, shawarma is maintaining its position as the preeminent street snack in the Gulf not only because of its excellent flavor derived from quality ingredients but also because it is a quick, convenient, and cheap food on the move.

Shawarma stalls are often small establishments, the core being the vertical roasting spits loaded with prepared lamb and chicken (laham, djaj), which are rotated by hand in front of a bank of gas burners. These are on the edge of the pavement and may be backed up with a small restaurant with just a few seats and cold cabinets for drinks. This is little more than a waiting and paying zone as all the action happens out on the footpath. Local ordinances may require that the food preparation is contained within a glazed frontage.

The meat is invariably identifiable cuts of meat. It is not the homogeneous processed mass of meat that is used in some countries that have adopted the shawarma. The clientele is discerning and usually have a regular shawarma stall that they frequent on a regular basis.

The shawarma stall advertises itself with an enticing display of food to attract customers. Apart from the sight and aroma of roasting meat, there will be vocal calls to buy and the frequent rasp of carving knife on steel to attract customers. The scene is theatrical as meat is briskly sliced from the vertical spit, scooped onto opened flatbread, spiked with pickles and chopped herbs, doused with tahina sauce, and finally rolled tightly into a screw of paper to be proffered to the customer ready to eat. If chicken is chosen, the tahina will be replaced with a garlic sauce, and perhaps a cold chip or two will be added. A vegetarian version will comprise several balls of falafel squashed into the bread pocket with pickles and tahina sauce. The bread used may vary: in Kuwait, long bread rolls called samoor were used in the 1980s, the inner crumb being hollowed out to make way for the meat.

This is all produced with a flowing sequence of well-practiced moves. There will usually be a cluster of customers being served and a posse of 4WD vehicles at the kerb also waiting for orders. These are universally popular venues in the evening; whole families will be fed within the privacy of their vehicle, with food ordered by the driver and handed in through partially opened windows.

## **Beverages**

These snacks are now accompanied by the international fizzy drinks in cans and bottles. Some shawarma stalls will offer a fruit cocktail. This is usually a drink in three layers of blended fruit, banana, strawberry, and mango, to be drunk through a straw so that layers may be sampled individually. An upmarket stall will have a selection of other fruits as substitutes.

## Sweets

Occasionally, sweet confections will be available such as *ataif*. These are small pancakes that are folded over a filling of cream cheese or sweetened ground walnuts. They may be served in this plain form or be deep-fried and soaked in sugar syrup.

In Yemen, on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, a distinctive street snack is *mutabagiyya*. It is made from two sheets of thin paste, one about 6" × 8" laid on another 12" × 18" square. Chopped green onions and a raw egg are placed on the small sheet, and the sides are folded over to make a 6" × 8" packet that is fried on a griddle. It is then cut into four neat pieces. Yemen also has many small truck stop cafes or stands that serve breakfasts of *ful* (soupy boiled fava beans with onions, tomato, and cumin), accompanied by narrow, squarish, hot-dog bun-like loaves of European-style leavened bread that are oddly referred to by the Indian name *roti*.

*Phil Iddison*

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## Argentina

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The Argentine Republic is the second-largest country in South America by land area. Before the arrival of Europeans at the beginning of the 16th century, the area was settled by colonies of the Inca Empire and by nomadic Indian tribes. Argentina became a colony of Spain in 1580 and won its independence in 1815. An estimated 60 percent of the population has some Italian descent, thanks to large-scale immigration in the 19th and 20th centuries. Argentina is divided into several culinary zones, each distinguished by its own distinctive gastronomic characteristics. In the central region and the Pampas (the great Argentinean plains), dishes with a strong Italian influence, such as pizza, pasta, and polenta, are consumed on a daily basis. Pre-Hispanic dishes and ingredients, such as corn, potatoes, and chilies, are common in the northwestern provinces, while Welsh and Central European immigrants have influenced the gastronomy of the cool Tierra del Fuego region in the far south.

Most major cities have vendors who walk the streets with small carts, or park their carts in strategic locations, selling everything from local specialties to staple fast food. At first glance, Argentina's capital, Buenos Aires, like other big cities in the country, does not appear to have a large street-food culture. Argentine lunches

are traditionally more leisurely affairs than in many of the world's cities. Rather than grab a quick lunch from a street cart, people often go to little restaurants or *fondas* and sit for an hour or two. Another reason for the lack of large numbers of street-food vendors are that some consider it rude to eat while standing. Moreover, many streets in the business districts are so narrow that parked carts block traffic. They are highly regulated for health and traffic reasons. The ubiquitous Argentine *parilla*, or grill, is allowed only in certain places, and the varieties of what they serve are limited. Despite the apparent scarcity of street food, intrepid diners can find and eat fast food on the street if they know where to look.

Parks, green areas, and squares are the first place you can spot vendors selling street food. Sandwiches are popular. The *pebete*, a tender bun sandwich with ham and cheese, is the most famous combination in Argentina. But also worth trying is the pepperoni and cheese *pebete*. Around train stations, commuters can find hot dogs called *panchos* or *súper panchos* (meaning average size and large ones), *milanesa* (breaded cutlet) sandwich, and the regular Buenos Aires snacks: garrapiñada (caramelized nuts), salty or sweet popcorn, and orange juice squeezed to order.

The Costanera boardwalks are also good spots to find Argentine street food. On the city banks of the Río de la Plata, small mobile food stands called *carritos* sit by the riverside. They serve cheap simply grilled meats (*parilla*), *choripán*, and drinks. The Costanera Norte, near the metropolitan airport, is where many taxi drivers lunch on their *choripán*. In 1966, the military dictator Juan Carlos Onganía banned the authentic *carritos*, painted in white and with wheels, and then cleared out those who tried to resist the move with bulldozers. But the *carrito* has lived on in the form of fixed stalls made of sheet iron and relatively permanent wagons with odd names like “El Puestito del Tío” (Uncle’s Little Place), “El Parrillón” (the Griller), “El Cocacolero” (the Coca Cola Man), and others. Many have been dodging municipal inspections for years. In Costanera Sur, business executives from Puerto Madero (the newest and upscale neighborhood in Buenos Aires) blend with taxi drivers and families on weekends at the famed *carritos*.

*Fútbol* (soccer) is very popular in Argentina, and the stadiums and surrounding streets are good places to find street food. Inside the bigger stadiums, only hamburgers (known as *patys*), *panchos*, popsicles, and occasionally *choripán* are sold. Outside the stadiums, varieties of sellers offer everything from empanadas and *chorizos a la pumarola* (in tomato sauce) to pizza. The word *canchera* refers to a stadium, and a *canchero* or eater is used to describe somebody with street credibility.

## Major Street Foods

### ***Choripán* (or *Chori*)**

*Choripán* is Argentina’s most recognizable street food. It is one of those ubiquitous cultural icons that unites a country, regardless of peoples’ socioeconomic status.

The *choripán* or *chori* is said to be the product of the mid-19th century when gauchos (cowboys) used to eat sausage on bread that was toasted on open grills. This new form of sandwich is a *chorizo*-style sausage served on French bread. The bread can be whole or split vertically into two parts and grilled again. The dish later moved to the cities where it became popular. Two centuries later, it is now a key part of street food, a delicious Argentine classic. The usual Argentine dressing for *choripán* is *chimichurri*, a sauce made with garlic, marjoram, red pepper, oil, and vinegar, according to the traditional recipe. One story claims that the name comes from Jimmy McCurry, an Irishman sympathetic to the cause of Argentine independence who is said to have first prepared the sauce when marching with General Belgrano's troops in the 19th century. As his name was difficult for the native people to say, the name was corrupted to *chimichurri*.

## Grilled Meats

But the real tradition in Argentina has always been, and will be, the grill. In several working-class neighborhoods in Buenos Aires, like La Boca or Mataderos and also near the big meat-packaging plants, there are many little hole-in-the-wall *parrillas* where standing to eat is commonplace. These spots are little more than stand-up lunch counters, where workers on a quick break can cram in a *choripán* (sausage sandwich), a *vaciopan* (flank steak sandwich), or a huge slice of pizza. Pizza canchera, along with others, is more like a calzone, that is, a flat dough filled with cheese or meats, then folded over and baked. Another favorite is Buenos Aires classic *fainá* (a baked flatbread made with ground chickpea flour often used as a base for pizza). For larger meals, the gauchos (cowboys) of the Pampas invented the *asado*. These are large wood-fired grills on which all sorts of meats, including intestines, are cooked. It is considered to be Argentina's national dish and can be considered as street food only when it is served at festivals. Today riverside *carritos* offer a quite sophisticated range of *parrilla* options: from sandwiches to small plates, including the different types of sausages: *chorizo*, *morcilla*, *salchicha parrillera*, as well as various cuts of meat, both beef and pork.

The most recent development that now rivals *parilla* and *choripán* in popularity is the *bondiola* sandwich or *bondipan*. It is a slice of roasted pork shoulder served in bread and accompanied by lemon juice. Some carts have a few plastic tables and chairs, but most people eat standing up by the bar, in public benches, or inside their cars.

## Sweet Breads

*Carritos* are also found in different parts of the sprawling Parque Tres de Febrero and handicraft fairs like Recoleta, where they often share space with coffee vendors (the coffee is very sweet). Aside from serving sandwiches, they offer mixtures of Spanish and French patisserie, among which are *vigilantes* (long shaped, with



A man eats a *choripán*, a pork and beef sausage sandwich, as another sips mate, a herbal tea, in an improvised restaurant in the La Boca neighborhood in Buenos Aires, Argentina. (AP Photo/Natacha Pisarenko)

custard), regular butter croissants and sweeter ones dipped in sugar syrup, *tortitas negras* (sweet dough baked with milk and covered with brown sugar), at relatively low prices. They can also be found at the entrance of hospitals and train stations. At the amusement parks, the vending stalls and vendors offer treats for children: snowflake sugar, caramelized apples with popcorn, figs in syrup on brochette sticks, ice creams, and a local specialty: *alfajores* (two round sweet biscuits joined together with mousse, *dulce de leche* (caramel) or jam and coated with black or white chocolate).

### **Chipás**

The *chipá* comes from the Mesopotamian region between Northern Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Paraguay. These cheese buns or cheese breads are a variety of small, baked manioc flour and cheese-flavored rolls, an inexpensive snack that is often sold from street-side stands or by vendors carrying heat-preserving containers. A relatively new kind of street dish is grilled bread similar to the Indian *chapati* that is prepared mainly by women vendors near the city's railway stations. Mostly women vendors grill this white bread by the railway stations that dot the city. Early in the morning, the vendor uses a grill built from half a 200-liter barrel and a barbecue-like rack over a burning coal fire to make a delicious comfort food that is not especially healthy.

### **Salsa Criolla and Other Toppings**

Although not a separate street food, almost all vendors serve *salsa criolla* with their dishes. It is basically chopped onion, tomato, red and green pepper with vinegar,



and oil. Other toppings for street dishes include mayonnaise, mustard (American style), ketchup (sweet, not hot), *salsa golf* (thought to be a local invention that is made by simply mixing ketchup and mayonnaise), pickled vegetables, *lluvia de papas* (crumbled potato crisps showered as a topping on such dishes as *súper panchos* or hot dogs and hamburgers), tomato and lettuce, chopped canned mushrooms, and crumbled bacon.

### Other Street Foods

*Churros*: fried rods of sweet dough filled with *dulce de leche* (milk caramel sauce).

*Colaciones*, *caña* sweets, and *rosqueta* are sweet doughs made with milk and boiled before being cooked in the oven, like a bagel. These, too, are a north Argentinian specialty.

Doughnuts and *bolas de fraile* or *berlinesas*: fried and tender doughnuts, sprinkled with sugar.

*Empanadas*: savory filled pastries, are especially popular in the northern part of Argentine.

*Pastelitos*: fried puff pastry filled with quince or sweet potato paste, dipped in sugar syrup.

*Tamales*: also popular in the north.

Marcela Mazzei

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## Australia

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The Commonwealth of Australia consists of the Australian continent, the island state of Tasmania, and many small islands around the continental mass. Australia has been continuously inhabited by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for more than 50,000 years. Indigenous foodways—“bush tucker”—drawing on native plants and animals have remained marginalized. The indigenous peoples remained isolated from developing civilizations in South East Asia until trade in trepan (sea cucumber) with the Bugi fisherman of Macassar in the early 15th century

followed by the colonization of the continent by Britain beginning in 1770, but there is little influence in the cuisine from this source either.

Over the next 200 years, six independent self-governing British Crown colonies were established, and these formed the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. For most of its modern nationhood, Australian foodways have largely derived from British traditions.

Southern Chinese were the first large-scale migration heading for the Victorian goldfields from the mid-1850s. The local Chinese restaurant became a recognizable feature of every town in Australia and has remained so. Post–World War II migrations from Europe brought whole communities of Italians and Greeks together with Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. It was to this migration Australia owed the development of a European cafe culture, with its profusion of cakes and pastries at one end and the town milk bar at the other, selling milkshakes, fish and chips, and hamburgers. The 1973 dismantling of the White Australia Policy, which had restricted migration of nonwhite peoples, and the end of the Vietnam War saw large migrations of South East Asians and a growth in tourism by Australians into Asia. This led to the development of the fusion of Western and Eastern foodways that became known as Mod Oz and the transformation of Asian hawker stalls into indoor food halls in shopping centers. Refugees from the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia have further diversified the population and the cuisine.

Street food underwent parallel changes to the home and dining-out diet. Other factors also have shaped it in Australia. The first is a long-standing Anglo Australian attitude that considers it bad manners to eat in the street. The second factor, and one of more consequence, is the enactment of hygiene regulations at all three levels of government that made it increasingly hard to sell food from barrows, vans, stalls, and even more difficult to prepare food on the street. Other legislation that affected street food grew out of laws protective of the city markets and the small corner stores and cafes that removed vendors from roadways where they impeded traffic flow. Recent reverses to this trend include eat carts in the city selling gourmet and snacks and pavement restaurant dining.

## Major Street Foods

### Pies and Pastries

Pies have been a staple of Australian street food since its earliest days as a colony, sold by the pie man on foot, from a pie cart, or increasingly from cafes and hotels as small businesses grew. Harry's Cafe de Wheels in Woolloomooloo is the last still operating. Pie fillings have varied with the cost of meats, health concerns, and most recently gourmandizing. They range from chunky meat in thick brown gravy,

through low-grade mince (plain or curried), to meat and vegetable combinations (meat and potatoes, chicken, and mushroom), and to lamb shanks cooked in red wine. The South Australian pie floater is often cited as a uniquely Australian dish, a meat pie afloat in a soup of peas gravy. The pie has been accompanied throughout by the Cornish pasty, or also a meat- and vegetable-filled half moon-shaped pastry. Sausage rolls, mince wrapped in a log of puff pastry, have been the other constant. Tomato sauce remains the traditional condiment for all of these. Multiculturalism brought with it Greek *spanakopita* (filo pastry) and Turkish *gözleme* (a roti-style pancake) both enclosing spinach and feta or mince in the case of the latter, and both accompanied with a slice of lemon. Cosmopolitanism brought variations on quiche. Vegetarianism brought lentil pies.

### **Sandwiches, Rolls, and Wraps**

Like encasing fillings in pastry, putting a range of ingredients between two slices of bread and variations of this form a large part of Australian street food. The bread or the roll (round or torpedo shaped) has changed from white bread through a range of wholemeal and multigrains to artisan breads and sourdoughs. Fillings have evolved from the simple, like egg and lettuce, tomato and cheese, or pressed meats (devon, salamis), to virtually anything from the multicultural menu that can be spread or sliced. Focaccia is filled with chicken and avocado and served fresh or toasted. Pide/pita and other flatbreads are opened into pockets that are filled with or wrapped around hummus, tabouleh, kebab meats, or shawarma. Vietnamese pork rolls pile together pate, roast pork slices, pressed pork, grated carrot, sliced cucumber, sprigs of coriander and fish, and chili sauces. The hamburger plays a central part, both in its earliest form of a homemade meat patty topped with beetroot, tomato, and lettuce (and occasionally pineapple), and in its fast-food forms.

### **Grills**

The sausage sizzle—a range of sausages cooked outdoors on a grill or hot plate—began as a picnic and grew into a ubiquitous food at charity fund-raisers, outside public houses and at large sporting events. The sausage is eaten in a sandwich or a roll smothered in grilled onions and tomato sauce and now mustard and chili sauce also. Its cousin is the steak sandwich similarly prepared.

### **Fried Food**

Seafood is battered and/or crumbed, sprinkled with vinegar, dusted with salt and a wedge of lemon, and is served wrapped in paper. Potato chips or scallops are enjoyed as accompaniment or as a meal themselves. The chiko roll is the only Australian street food for which an identifiable inventor and moment of creation can be verified—Frank McEnroe, 1951, in Bendigo (rural Victoria). McEnroe took the

Chinese fried spring roll, gave it a thicker pastry cover, stuffed it with minced mutton and sliced vegetables, and supersized it.

## Salads

With increasing concern for healthier eating, prepackaged single services of salad have become a staple street food. Pasta salads (cold cooked pasta mixed with a variety of ingredients), Greek salads (olives, tomato, capsicum, feta, and lettuce with vinaigrette), and tropical fruit salads are particularly popular.

## Other Street Foods

### Drinks

Milkshakes (milk, flavoring, and ice cream blended) remain a favorite along with smoothies (yogurt, fruit, and milk blended with freshly blended fruits and vegetables as juices or crushes (with ice)) and commercial carbonated drinks.

### Ice Creams

Choc tops (a scoop of ice cream covered with a hard coating of chocolate sauce served in a cone) are popular cinema fare. Suburban streets still ring to the tones of “Greensleeves” as the Mr. Whippy soft serve ice-cream van comes by. Gelato outlets create flavor combinations to reflect changing tastes.

### Fruit and Nut Stalls

The fruit and nut barrows of the first half of the 20th century are gone. In their place are more permanent booths now also carrying salads, sandwiches, and wraps.

*Paul van Reyk*

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## Austria

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Austria is a nation of 8 million people, much of whose land is located in the mountainous Alpine region of Central Europe. Although small, it has an exceptionally rich cultural history and splendid cuisine, much of it centered in the capital city, Vienna. For hundreds of years, Austria was the center of the Habsburg or

Austro-Hungarian Empire, a multiethnic state that stretched across middle Europe. Though a German-speaking country, Austria's food carries Czech, Hungarian, Croat, Italian, Polish, Ukrainian, French, Ottoman Turkish, and Jewish influences. Today's street food offers a vibrant food culture that combines the old and the new, local and global, domestic and immigrant. It offers a wide array of choices from the expected sausage to the not-so-expected Asian sushi and noodles, kebabs, and pizza.

## Major Street Foods

### Sausage

*Würstelstanden* (sausage stands) are the most typical Austrian street food. These are mainly standing only and have a bar around the small structure, where people can set their paper plates and then eat. Sausage stands sell a wide variety of sausages. The most popular are *Käsekrainer* (literally “pus filled”), which is injected with melting cheese, *Debreziner* (thin spicy sausage), *Frankfurter*, also called Wiener (often called *Würstel mit Senf*, meaning served with hot or sweet mustard on a roll), *Burenwurst* (thick chunky sausage), *Bratwurst* (grayish-white sausage), *Weißwurst* (a fat Bratwurst), and *Bosna* (Bratwurst topped with curry powder and served with onions and mustard on a hot dog bun). Sausages can be served as a hot dog in a long bun or on a paper plate with a slice of bread or a roll, and a choice of spicy or sweet mustard, and pickles, onions, or hot peppers.

One Austrian specialty found at *Würstelstanden* and in many shops is *Leberkäse*. The word is directly translated as “liver cheese,” though the actual liver content can vary from none to 5–6 percent. *Leberkäse* is made of ground meat, pork or beef, bacon, onions, bread crumbs, and spices, which is formed into a loaf and baked until it is spongy soft inside with a fine crust on the outside. It is usually served hot on a cut roll and with sliced pickles or mustard to taste. It can be also sold cold, in which case it is eaten thinly cut as a cold cut. Aside from the regular *Leberkäse*, there are also *Käseleberkäse* (with melting cheese pockets), *Pikanteleberkäse* (with pieces of paprika), and *Pferdeleberkäse* (made of horse meat), though the last one is available only in special delis that sell mainly horse-meat products.

### International Influences

Sausage stands are popular among the older generation at lunchtime, but are patronized by younger people for a late-night snack after a night out. So are the newly popular Asian noodle stands. With names like Happy Noodles or Crazy Noodles, they are served in a box, with the basic options being vegetables or chicken. Other

versions contain duck breast, teriyaki chicken, or salmon, sweet-and-sour shrimp, or spicy beef. Noodle stands are especially popular among younger people and often have long lines. They also sell prepacked sushi and maki boxes, as well as soups and mini spring rolls.

Because of immigration from Turkey and the Balkan countries, kebabs are sold all over Austria. There are several different kebab stands, ranging from those in green markets that are generally cheaper, to those that double as Turkish restaurants and kebab-only places, usually on the main city streets. Kebabs can be made from chicken, lamb, or beef and are served on either a large white bun or wrapped in a tortilla-like pancake (called *Dörum*). They are topped with lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and yogurt sauce.

Pizza-by-the-slice is a classic street food in Austria. The slices are usually rather large, and the most popular ingredients are ham, mushrooms, salami (pepperoni), vegetarian (broccoli, sweet corn, paprika, tomatoes), spinach and feta cheese, and tuna and onions. Very often the same places that sell pizza also sell falafel, kebab, schnitzel, and lately even Asian noodle boxes.

## Baked Goods

Much of what can be called “street food” is sold from shops as “takeout” to be eaten on the go. Baked goods are among them. Austria’s bakery culture is probably only second to that of France. The country’s numerous bakeries offer a wide range of rolls, breadsticks, pretzels, rye breads, sourdough and yeast breads, whole meal buns and loaves, filled puff pastries, doughnuts, cakes, and fruit loaves. Bakeries are located on main streets, in train stations, city squares, and shopping malls, and are the most popular breakfast choice of Austrians. Many also sell premade cold sandwiches in their own rolls, buns and breads, as well as drinks. The most popular items are the *Salzstangerl* (kosher-salt bread stick), the *Semmel* (dinner roll), the *Laugenbretzel* (lye pretzel), the *Nuss- or Mohnbeugel* (sweet bread filled with sweet walnut or poppy seed), the croissant, and the *Kornspitz* (wholemeal bread with seeds inside or on top).

## Deli Meats

Most supermarkets in Austria have a deli counter (*Feinkost*), where people can buy such take-out food as any cold cut, cheese, pickle, or spread in a roll of choice prepared on the spot. These delis also sell prepacked sandwiches (triangles, baguettes, ham rolls), as well as packed salads, fruit salads, yogurt cereal, ready-made microwave meals, and even sushi boxes. Also most have a hot box for *Leberkäse*, grilled chicken, Schnitzel, Stelze (ham hock), roast pork belly, roast cumin pork, mince patties, and sausages. There are also special butcher/deli shops, specializing in cold

cuts, which offer an endless variety of sandwiches, especially made of pork, and where one can usually get a warm meal as well.

## Schnitzel

The schnitzel shop is another typically Austrian food shop, where, for a little money, diners get any of a huge variety of this classic Austrian dish, which is a thin cutlet of meat, often veal, coated in fine breadcrumbs and fried. The best known are *Schnitzelsemmel* (Viennese Schnitzel, breaded and deep-fried, chicken, turkey, or pork served on a roll with salad, ketchup, mayonnaise, and/or sauce tartar); *Fischsemmel* (the same, but with breaded fish); *Cordon Bleu* (Schnitzel with melting cheese inside); breaded fried cheese, mushrooms, zucchini, eggplant, and cauliflower; fried chicken wings, chicken drumsticks, and sometimes grilled chicken; and sides of French fries, wedges, potato salad, and cucumber salad. Some of these places offer limited seating for a quick bite, but mostly the food is taken and eaten on the go.

## Other Street Foods

Other kinds of street food are sold at special events and during various seasons. Typically a lot of food is available in amusement parks and at festivals. These range from small snacks to more filling foods. Among them are caramelized nuts, seeds and nuts, popcorn, cotton candy, corn-on-the-cob, ice cream, pancakes, cold drinks, hot dogs, burgers, kebabs, beer, and *Grillhendl* (grilled chicken). Some stands have *Langos* (a Hungarian type of flat dough, deep-fried till crispy, and topped with garlic oil to taste), *Pofesen* (French toast, filled with special plum jam called *Powidl*), *Krapfen* (doughnuts), and even pickles, sold by the piece straight from a huge jar. *Kirtage*, originally a village church festival celebrating the patron saint of the church, are nowadays more like traveling carnivals/amusement parks. They set up in town or village squares, featuring stalls with various handcrafted gifts, merry-go-rounds, and of course, food.

Once the summer season opens, Eis (ice cream) is extremely popular. Long lines forming in front of the main Italian ice-cream shops are a regular sight. Ice cream is sold by the scoop in cones or cups, and the variety of flavors is enormous. An option is to sit down, usually by the sidewalk, and enjoy it in a “coup,” served in a glass with fruits, nuts, sauces, and whipped cream.

From September to March, chestnuts and potatoes are sold on street corners and in main squares. Chestnuts are roasted on the spot, and sold in paper cones. The potatoes can be *Bratkartofeln* (roasted wedges, salted), wedges (American style), or *Rösti* (hash browns).

Christmas markets, which are held all over Austria for four weeks during the Advent season, also revolve around food. Since it is the cold season, people like to keep warm by eating and drinking. The main offerings are mulled wine and punch, *Lebkuchen* (honey ginger bread) and other traditional Christmas sweets, *Mohnnudeln* (potato dumplings with sweet butter poppy seed), *Kaiserschmarren* (sweet, scrambled pancakes with plum compote), roast chestnuts, potatoes, pancakes, *Langos*, and hot dogs.

Summertime green and farmers' markets also offer food on the spot. Not only can consumers get fresh fruit to eat immediately, but vendors also sell cold cut sandwiches, falafel, Turkish *börek* (a wrapped pastry), Asian noodle boxes, boxed sushi, Italian antipasti, kebabs, and all kinds of sweets.

## Coffee

Austria has a long tradition of coffeehouses, but these are elegant sit-down establishments, where busy businessmen, students, and tourists have the option of having coffee on the go. They include American franchises, such as Starbucks, local ones such as The Coffeeshop Company, and smaller coffee shops. One can also buy cold drinks, smoothies, and shakes from some of these places. The most recent addition has been Tealicious, the bubble tea company, which has recently opened two stands in Vienna. There is an old saying in Central Europe that for the best and greatest varieties of food, there is no place like Vienna.

*Katerina Nussdorfer*

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# B

## **The Balkans (Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Albania)**

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The Balkans (sometimes called the Balkan Peninsula) is an area in Southeastern Europe surrounded by the Adriatic Sea on the west, the Mediterranean Sea on the south, the Black Sea on the east, and with the Danube, Sava, and Kupa rivers as their northern boundary. It is a mountainous region, which affects the ethnic/national makeup, as well as the kinds of foods eaten by people there. Within the Balkans are the nations of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia, Serbia, and Slovenia.

Because of centuries of shared history, much of it under the rule of the Ottoman Empire (1299–1923 CE), food throughout the region has many similarities. The subtle differences are sometimes detectable only by a connoisseur of the food of the region. Street food is most prominent in those countries/regions where the traditions of the Ottoman Empire are most apparent: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Croatia and Slovenia were under Ottoman rule for a short period and then part of the Austrian–Hungarian Empire, and this is reflected in their culinary traditions.

Although the street-food culture of the Balkans is not as important as in some other European countries, it is gaining in popularity with the advent of Western fast food. This combination of old traditions and new trends offers a unique picture of food consumption in urban spaces. Thus, *буреk* (burek) (traditional Ottoman filled pastries) can be found throughout the region alongside such global foods as pizza and hamburgers. While *burek* is a typical Balkan food, there are countless ways of preparing it, some of which became the standard in each country.

Western-style fast food is very popular among the younger generation, but street food is liked by everyone. Many street foods are part of the national diets and are enjoyed by people of all ages and walks of life. Street food is consumed throughout the day: as a late breakfast/early lunch for working people, high school and university students; as a late-night snack before or after going out; or as a cheaper option to a restaurant meal.

Unemployment is fairly widespread in the region, and selling food is sometimes a means of self-employment, although it yields a relatively low income, especially for mobile or fixed carts that sell such foods as *ѓеврек* (gjevrek, sesame ring), *перек* (perek, pretzel), seeds and nuts, cold drinks, popcorn, pancakes, mini-doughnuts,

## Boza

Boza is a thick, sweet, slightly acidic drink made of water, flour, sugar, and some fermenting agent (boza itself, sugar, yeast, or malt). It is a traditional drink, dating back to even before the Ottoman Empire; during the empire, its popularity was spread to all the subject countries.

It can be made with wheat, bulgur, corn, or millet. Boza is sold in pastry and ice-cream shops, eaten cold, with sweets, or even with ice cream. Boza is an acquired taste, but it is rich in calories and vitamins and is a favorite drink in the Balkans.

cotton candy, corn on the cob, and roast chestnuts. However, much of what is considered street food in the Balkans is sold in such registered business establishments as bakeries, mini markets, grocery stores, fast-food restaurants, and green market stalls. Vending machines are almost nonexistent in the Balkans with some exceptions (in Slovenia, some office spaces, airports). Generally, street food is considered safe and sanitary, especially when it is sold in semi-closed or closed eateries or shops.

Some foods are sold throughout the region with no or minor differences among them. They include such seasonal foods as boiled corn on the cob, which is usually sold during the summertime, but increasingly in other seasons. Corn is cooked and sold in special mobile carts, wrapped in paper and eaten with salt. Another seasonal food is roast chestnuts, which are cooked and sold directly in the street in paper cones from October through late December. Crepes are thin pancakes, usually sweet and filled with jam, honey, sugar, nuts, or chocolate spread. They can also be savory and/or coated in bread crumbs and deep-fried. Crepes are sold in special shops or on street corners, where they are cooked on the spot on special hot plates.

Popcorn and cotton candy are popular in all Balkan countries and typically sold in amusement parks, fairs, on city squares and promenades. In Macedonia, mini-doughnuts are a common outdoor food.

A relatively new food gaining in popularity throughout the region are fornetti, small puff pastries, with sweet (jam, chocolate) or savory (cheese, mince, spinach, mushrooms) fillings. Fornetti is also the name of the bakery chain that sells them. Standard accompaniments are boza, a thick sweet, slightly acidic fermented drink; airan, a frothy salty yogurt drink popular in many Middle Eastern countries; yogurt; or Western-style soda.

Ice cream is a favorite street food in the summer, with slight differences from country to country. In Bulgaria, it is sold from mobile carts, soft-serve machines, or in ice-cream parlors. In Macedonia and Bosnia, it is sold in traditional sweet shops offering Turkish-style delicacies, sweet, drinks, and home-made ice cream, while in Croatia and Slovenia, it is sold in Italian-style gelato shops.

## Major Street Foods

### *Burek*

*Burek* is the most popular street food in the Balkans. The word is applied to a family of baked or fried *pastries* made of a thin flaky *dough* similar to phyllo and filled with cheese, minced meat, vegetables, or fruits. It was probably invented in the Anatolian provinces of the Ottoman Empire and spread through Europe and the Middle East as far as North Africa. It may be made in a large pan and cut into portions after baking or prepared as individual pastries.

In the Balkans, *burek* is sold in bakeries or special shops. Most have chairs and small bistro tables; many also have windows for buying take-out food. In Bulgaria, where it is called *баница/баничка* (*banitsa, banichka*), it is sold as small individual pies or as one large pie cut in quarters. Popular fillings are spinach, cheese, and pumpkin. It is accompanied by *airan* or *boza*. In Serbia, it is sometimes sold by weight, sometimes by the piece. In Macedonia, where *burek* is mainly eaten for breakfast, it can be filled with minced meat, white cheese, spinach, leeks, or mushrooms, ham, and ketchup (so-called pizza-*burek*) and cut into quarters or eighths. In Slovenia, *bureks* are usually snail-shaped and are eaten at night in *burek* stands. In Croatia, they are sold in bakeries, mainly with a cheese, spinach, or a sweet filling.

### *Ćevapi*

After *burek*, the most popular street food in the Balkans are *ćevapi* (a variation of the word kebab) and its diminutive *ćevapčići* (in Romania, they are called *mititei*). They are usually made of ground pork, beef, or lamb formed into long sausage-shaped tubes and grilled over hot coals or an electric burner. In the former Yugoslavia, the vendors are Muslim Bosnians or Albanians. In Bulgaria, where they are called *кебапчама* (*kebabčeta*), they are slightly bigger and thicker than elsewhere in the region and eaten with white bread and a paprika spread. In Serbia, *ćevapčići* are served in a special white bread bun, with many such side dishes as cream salad, sour cream, ketchup, roast pepper, hot peppers, crushed red pepper, cabbage, mayonnaise, mustard, onions, and lettuce. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, they are sold in special restaurants in Baščaršija, the old part of Sarajevo. The Macedonian version, *kebabčinya* (*кебапчиња*), is sold in traditional restaurants in the Old Bazaar section of Skopje and in grill-by-the-kilo booths in other parts of the city. They are eaten with onions, crushed chilies, grilled hot green peppers, and white bread. In Croatia, *ćevapčići* are not as popular as in the other countries, but are still easy to find. In Slovenia, they are mainly available in sit-down restaurants as part of a Serbian-style grill.

## Pizza-by-the-Slice

Pizza is served in various ways throughout the Balkans. In Bulgaria, pizza is sold in street stands or special pizza booths, and in Serbia, cream salad can be added as a topping. Croatian pizzerias are ubiquitous, especially in Zagreb and the seaside towns, and in neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are fast-food pizzerias, whole or by the slice. In Slovenia, the Neapolitan-style margharita or Slovenian prosciutto are the best sellers, while in Macedonia, pizza slices are mainly sold in bakeries or smaller fast-food places.

## Western-Style Hamburgers

Hamburgers, including those sold at chains like McDonald's and Burger King, which are different from local hamburgers, have become popular all over the Balkans since the early 1990s, with a larger presence in major cities and urban areas, and mostly among the younger generation.

## Bulgaria

In addition to the street foods described earlier, another popular street food in Bulgaria is *ѓеврек* (gevrek), a baked dough sesame ring, very much like its Turkish original sold in the street, from carts, or improvised stands. Sandwiches, which are usually soft baguettes filled with *кайма* (cream cheese), yellow cheese, and cold cuts, are sold in stands at bus stops and underground walkways. Döner kebabs, cooked on long spits, are served from small storefront restaurants and usually accompanied with French fries and airan. Fried doughnuts are commonly sold on street stands, eaten with powdered sugar. Roast pumpkin, cut into pieces with the shell on, is sold in the autumn by street vendors, though it is not too common.

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## Serbia

In addition to *burek*, bakeries sell home-style pita (pie) and various pastries such as Bavarian Kipferl, ciabatta with olives, garlic bread sticks, mini pizzas, hot dog rolls, and puff pastries. One cannot avoid the *djevrek*, the sesame dough ring that can be baked or boiled like a bagel. Hamburgers are very popular and are served in special white bread bun called lepinja with many side dishes such as cream salads, vegetables, and sauces. Also widely eaten are breaded fried yellow cheese, fried or grilled chicken, or chicken/pork skewers, all served with bread. Sandwiches, usually made with cold cuts, cream cheese, and salads,

are sold cold or hot. Giros, the Greek version of döner kebab, is made with chicken or pork and served in a pita bread with French fries, as are grilled kebabs (chicken or beef). Hot dog stands are also present, and very popular street food is pomfrit, French fries, served in a paper cone with ketchup, sour cream, and/or mayonnaise.

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## Croatia

In Croatia, bakeries offer various savory and sweet pastries, muffins, and traditional Strudel-style pies. Surf'n'fry (a Croatian chain specializing in fries, even chocolate-covered fries!) is a real hit, and so are *SUBWAY*® sandwiches. Kebabs are easily found, and so are sausage stands where *debrecinke* and *kranjske kobasice* (types of sausages) are best sellers. In Zagreb, small wooden huts with red checked table decor offer different puff pastry pies with various fillings, called “Grandma’s pies.” Cold sandwiches and even slices of bread with lard can be bought in sandwich booths. There are also health food alternatives, the most popular of which are salad bars. In Zagreb, and especially in seaside resorts and towns, there is always a “hole-in-the-wall” eatery only known to locals, which usually serves excellent fresh food, namely, small fried fish to go, or grilled meats, fish, and seafood.

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## Bosnia and Herzegovina

In this predominantly Muslim region, a popular street food is *somun*, a hot bread sold in the streets in the morning and after sunset during Ramadan (the monthlong holiday when people fast during the day). Pretzels are sold by street vendors, while bakeries sell bread, kipferl, baguettes, and filled pies. Bosnian national dishes like *sogan-dolma* (onions stuffed with chopped beef, rice, paprika, and sour cream), bean soup, and stews can be bought ready-made in small shops called *aščinice*. Sandwiches, French fries, burgers, hot dogs, and chicken are sold in fast-food places, while fruit juices and sodas are also sold in the street. Kebabs can be bought in towns and cities and in restaurants along major highways. As in the Middle East, many street- and fast-food outlets serve falafel, humus, lentil soup, curries, and healthy cakes. Pastry shops offer traditional ice cream, all sorts of cakes, sweets, boza (fermented flour drink), and lemonade. Nuts and seeds are sold in street carts as everyday snacks to be eaten “on the go.”

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## Slovenia

Slovenian street food shows the influence of both Balkan and Austro-Hungarian cuisine. Bakeries sell *štručki*, flat pastries covered with cheese, seeds, and grains; *zavitki* pastries with a sweet filling, usually cheese curd; and another sweet cheese curd-filled puff pastry, called *polžki*. Breads include *žemljici* or bread rolls and croissants. Packaged sandwiches are sold in supermarkets, gas stations, and vending machines. Döner kebab is popular, as are falafel and hommus, though they are sold mainly in the capital city, Ljubljana. Take-out salads with a packet of dressing are sold in supermarkets. One can buy traditional sweet pies in supermarkets and bakeries, for instance, *sirovi štruklji*, cooked dough layered and filled with cheese curd, raisins, or jam, *prekmurska gibanica*, layered cheese curd and walnuts pie, and *potica*, a famous sweet poppy seed, walnut, or raisin cake.

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## Macedonia

Macedonian street food is extremely varied. Bakeries and street carts sell *ѓеврек/gjevrek*, sesame rings, *непек/perek*, pretzels, and *варено ѓеврече/vareno gjevreche*, a bagel-like boiled snack. Other popular street foods are *баничка/banichka*, a spiral-shaped pie filled with white cheese, and *сумит погача/simit pogacha*, an unfilled *burek* served on a bun. Bakeries sell a wide range of *проја/proja*, cornbreads, *крофни/krofni*, doughnuts and *нума/pita*, pie. Very popular is *тост/tost*—a large soft white roll filled with ham, cheese, and/or mushrooms that is pressed on a grill and eaten with ketchup and mayonnaise. Pork gyros is served in a pita bread with fries, onions, ketchup, and mustard. A Macedonian specialty is *настрмајлија/pastrmajlija*, pieces of pork or chicken (originally cured mutton or pastrma) on an oval-shaped piece of pizza-like dough, sometimes with a baked egg on top.

Other favorites are *мекици/mekici*, deep-fried yeast dough that is hard on the outside and soft inside, and *пирошки/piroshki*, filled crepes that are breaded and fried. There is a wide variety of sandwiches, including *француски/комбиниран сендвич/francuski/kombiniran*, a hot or cold baguette or roll filled with cheese and ham with salad or French fries inside; whole wheat bread with veggie spreads from health-food stores; *pizza-sandwiches*, calzone-style baked dough filled with pizza-type filling, and *панџероту/panzerotti*, fried dough pockets filled with cheese, ketchup, mince, or ham. *Скара на кило/skara na kilo*, grilled meat sold by the kilo, is found in small restaurants with improvised sit-down places.

Hamburgers and hot dogs are different from those in the United States, since they feature large patties or hot dog links and are served in a bun along with French fries, ketchup, and mayonnaise or mustard. In the city of Ohrid, the traditional

regional specialty sold in street or green markets is *ѓомлезе/gjomleze*, multilayered thin dough baked in a large pan and cut into small pieces. National foods like *мавче гравче/tavche gravche*—baked beans, stews, casseroles, and soups—are also sold to-go from shops specializing in “home-made” meals. Pastry shops, especially in the Old Bazaar in Skopje, sell traditionally made *baklava*, phlo type pastries filled with honey, nuts, and dried fruits; *tulumba*, fried pieces of oval-shaped batter soaked in sugar syrup; *eclairs*, cream cakes; lemonade; boza, and ice cream. Street carts also sell take-out snacks such *seeds*, nuts, candy apples, and candies.

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## Albania

The Republic of Albania is bordered by Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Greece, with coastlines on the Adriatic and Ionian Seas and just 45 miles from Italy. Albania was at various times occupied by Greeks, Serbians, and Italians and part of the Ottoman Empire from 1431 until 1912, when it gained its independence. All these cultures have left their mark on its cuisine. Many Albanians immigrated to Greece and Italy in the 1990s and brought back with them gyro, pizza, moussaka, and other dishes that have become a part of the daily food.

As in the other Balkan countries, a popular street food is *byrek*, flaky triangle puffs filled with cheese, spinach, and meat that are sold in tiny storefronts. Another favorite is *cevapcici*, made with ground beef and topped with onions. Roasted chicken and sausages are also sold.

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## Bangladesh

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The People's Republic of Bangladesh, located between Myanmar and India on the Bay of Bengal, has an area of 144,000 sq km and a population of 142 million, making it the world's eighth largest country in population. The climate is tropical. Around 80 percent of the landmass is on the fertile alluvial lowland called the Bangladesh Plain, which receives heavy rainfalls during the monsoon season.

The territory that now constitutes Bangladesh was under the rule of various Islamic rulers, including the Mughals, from 1201 to 1757 when it passed under British rule. From then until 1947, the year in which India gained its independence from Britain, the territory was part of the Indian province of Bengal. In 1947, the region became East Pakistan, a part of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. East Pakistan gained its independence from Pakistan in 1971 and became an independent country. The capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka, has a population of more than 12 million people and is by far the largest city.

Culturally, linguistically, and gastronomically, Bangladesh has much in common with the Indian state of West Bengal. The main difference is religion. Whereas West Bengal is a predominantly Hindu region, around 85 percent of the population of Bangladesh are Muslim, 15 percent are Hindu, and 1 percent practice Buddhism or a tribal religion. Thus, most Bangladeshis follow Islamic food practices, which forbid the consumption of pork and alcohol.

The main crop of Bangladesh is rice, and it is the staple of the Bengali diet. Rice is heated in a sand-filled oven and popped to make *muri*, a popular component of many street snacks. The second dietary staple is wheat, which is grown in the western parts of the country.

The rich soil of Bangladesh produces a multitude of edible plants. Vegetables include eggplants, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, many kinds of gourds and squash, chilies, okra, amaranth, sweet potatoes, spinach, carrots, plantains, onions, radish, and water lilies. All parts of many plants are eaten, including the leaves, roots, stems, flowers, and stalks. Potatoes, grown in the winter, are widely eaten as a vegetable rather than a staple. Bangladesh abounds with more than 60 varieties of tropical and subtropical fruits. The most widely cultivated are mango, amra (a sour green fruit), pineapple, banana, litchi, citrus fruits, guava, papaya, custard apple, jambura (a large citrus fruit), sapodilla, coconut, tamarind, melon, watermelon, pomegranate, palmyra, plum, rose apple, and jackfruit (the national fruit of Bangladesh).

A major source of protein is fish, which is abundant in rivers, canals, floodplains, ponds, and lakes and in the Bay of Bengal. Because meat is expensive, consumption is low and is eaten by many Bangladeshis only on special occasions. The most

common meats are beef, water buffalo, goat, and chicken. Bangladesh is a major producer and exporter of chilies.

While Bangladesh has a rich culinary tradition, with elaborate multicourse meals characterizing the tables of the country's richest citizens, the food served up on the streets is much simpler. Bangladesh has one of the world's highest poverty rates, and its street food is primarily made of ingredients that are cheaply available and affordable to all classes. Meat is a rarity, as is fish. While street vendors are found presiding over pots of spicy *haleem* (a wheat and meat porridge), beef kabobs, and *shutki* (dried fish), these dishes are the exception rather than the rule. Most Bengali street food is made from lentils, vegetables, nuts, fruits, and cheaply available staples like rice and *atta* (whole wheat) flour. Chilies, spices, sugar, and distinctive cooking oils give street-side foods the full flavor that Bengalis enjoy. Many popular street foods are similar to those sold in India and Pakistan.

Bangladesh has one of the world's highest population densities, and as a result, street-food vendors are found almost everywhere. Wandering hawkers and pushcart vendors are called *feriwala*, while vendors who sell at the same location, even with a single basket, are known as *dokandar*. Street-food sellers sell their wares in markets and residential areas, along roadsides, near bus and train stations, and near schools and hospitals. Most of the vendors are men assisted by small boys, although women are involved in preparing ready-made foods and in selling certain items.

Because of a lack of reliable clean water sources and the absence of sanitary conditions on Bangladeshi street, food bought from vendors is a risky proposition that can lead to illness. Still, Bangladeshis consistently buy and eat food from vendors, even though they are aware of the risks, which is a testament to the appeal of some of the traditional street foods.

## Major Street Foods

### *Fuchka*

The two most common Bangladeshi street foods are *fuchka* and *chatpati*. *Fuchka* are similar to the *pani puris* or *golgappas* sold elsewhere on the subcontinent. They are small, bite-sized hollow *puris* (round deep-fried wheat breads) fried until they are crisp. The hollow part is then filled with a spoonful of chickpeas, onions, potatoes, chaat masala (a spice mixture), and tamarind. *Fuchka* stands also often serve *chatpati*, a hot and sour mixture of boiled diced potatoes, boiled chickpeas, sliced onions, and chilies with grated boiled eggs on top and topped off with sour tamarind sauce.



Bangladesh vendors sell fried snacks at the Chowk Bazaar Market, Dhaka, Bangladesh. (AP Photo/Pavel Rahman)

## Samosas and Singharas

Spiced meat, potatoes, or vegetables are stuffed into dough wraps that are deep-fried and served with chutney. These are staple snack foods all across the Indian subcontinent.

## *Jhal Muri*

This spicy (*jhal* means spicy hot) mixture of puffed rice (*muri*), crushed rice, chana dhal, *chanachur* (a mixture of spicy pulses and nuts), green chilies, roasted peanuts, lime juice, and a dash of mustard oil is an emblematic Bangladeshi dish. Made fresh for the equivalent of a few cents, *jhal muri* is mixed according to the customers' wishes and handed over in cones made from scraps of old newspaper. *Murir moa* is a sweet version made with puffed rice and jaggery (unrefined brown sugar).

## *Pithas*

These rice flour cakes are a favorite street-side teatime snack in Bangladesh. Countless varieties of *pithas* can be found throughout Bangladesh and Eastern India. Some are fried in oil, others are baked or steamed, and there are an infinite variety of fillings. Sweet *pithas* are made with *gur* (unrefined brown sugar) and are filled with dates, nuts, coconut, sweetened fruit pieces, milk, or other stuffings. Savory *pithas* may be filled with small morsels of spiced vegetables or potatoes.

*Vapa pitha*, small round steamed dumplings, are very popular in the winter in Dhaka and are usually sold by women.

### ***Bhortas***

*Bhortas* are mashed foods composed of any number of base ingredients—potatoes, vegetables (such as eggplant, squash, or cauliflower), fish, chicken, beef, or offal, or some combination of these items. The ingredients are cooked (usually boiled) and then laced with spices and onions and mashed into a tasty paste that serves as an accompaniment to rice and breads.

### **Breads (Roti)**

Roti shops are popular breakfast vendors in Bangladesh, serving up freshly heated flatbreads often accompanied with bananas or seasonal fruits. *Moghlai paratha* is a popular Bangladeshi street food consisting of a *paratha* (a large lightly fried wheat-flour bread) topped with ground spiced meat (keema) and egg (or sometimes egg alone), folded into square packets and deep-fried. *Bakarakhani* is a thick-layered bread made by repeatedly stretching a sheet of dough and spreading it with ghee and then baking or sautéing it. Stacks of *bakarakhani* lined up at bakeries are a common sight in the old part of Dhaka. It is often eaten with kabob. In Chittagong, it is dipped in sugar syrup.

### **Sweet Dishes**

No brief overview of Bangladeshi street foods is complete without discussing the preponderance of sweets, which are usually sold in small sweet shops. Grouped under the collective name *mishti*, Bangladeshi sweets include deep-fried syrupy *jilebis* (spirals of chickpea batter deep-fried and soaked in sugar syrup), sweetened yogurt (*mishti doi*), and *rasagulla* and *sandesh* made from sugar and farmer's cheese. Different parts of the country are famous for different sweets. The city Comilla, for instance, in the southeastern part of Bangladesh, is famous for producing the country's finest *rasa malai*, another sweet dish made of milk, eggs, and sugar and drenched in rich cream.

### **Dried Snacks**

Peanuts toasted in the shell are sold plain or with small packets of salt and chili or shelled and fried with chili powder and salt. *Canacur* is a fried, highly spiced mixture of peanuts, puffed rice, and pieces of dough made from wheat and various types of lentils. It can also be mixed with green chili, onions, boiled chickpeas, and mustard oil. *Nimki* are deep-fried strips of white flour dough that is salted and spiced.

## Tea

Small tea stands often consisting of little more than a kettle, teacups, small plates, jugs and a tea strainer, and a small wood or charcoal burning stove made of columns of bricks are ubiquitous in Bangladesh. The tea is mixed with sugar and warm milk and must be drunk piping hot. Some customers bring their own biscuits, fried snacks, or sweets purchased from other stands to munch with the tea. A round cookie called *bela biscuit* is sometimes dunked in the tea.

## Fruit and Vegetables

Freshly cut fresh fruit, often sprinkled with salt and red chili powder, or *kasundi*, a liquid condiment made from mustard seeds, spices, and water, is sold everywhere, as are fresh vegetables, such as cucumber. Pieces of the flesh of green coconut are sold as fruit. Freshly squeezed fruit juices are popular, while the vitamin-rich liquid in green coconuts is drunk directly from the shell. Vendors of sugarcane juice are a common sight. The juice is freshly squeezed from sugarcane and sometimes flavored with citrus juice or ginger.

## Iftari (Fasting Foods)

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk. They break their fast with a meal called *iftar*, which is often obtained by street vendors. Typical *iftar* dishes, called *iftari*, are deep-fried eggplant; *chola bhona*, a fried mixture of boiled chickpeas, onion, green chilies, and spices; *piyaju*, spicy lentil and onion fritters; and *ghugni*, boiled chickpeas served with spices and green chilies. These snacks are sold other times of the year as well. *Piyaju* is a popular snack on the Patenga Beach near Bangladesh's second largest city Chittagong on the Bay of Bengal. *Haleem*, a thick lentil and beef stew, is also popular during Ramadan.

*Fuad Ahmad*

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## Barbados

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Barbados is a small island nation in the Lesser Antilles with an area of less than 200 square miles and a population of around 300,000. Despite its small size, it has one

of the Western Hemisphere's most interesting street-food scenes, combining influences from many different cultures, including Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago.

Originally settled by the Caribs and the Arawaks, Barbados was claimed by the British in 1625. The introduction of sugarcane from Brazil in 1640 led to the building of large-scale plantations, the production of rum, and the introduction of slavery. Barbados won its independence from Britain in 1962. Today 80 percent of its population is of African origin while the rest are of Asian or European origin, including recent immigrants of Indian origin from Trinidad.

Street foods are sold from temporary stalls, vans, pushcarts, hawkers with trays, coal pots, and barbecues. A 300-year-old Bajan (the adjective for residents of the Barbados) institution is the rum shop. There are more than 1,500 rum shops on the island, including at least one in every village, and many of them sell not only rum (by the bottle) and beer but also local dishes prepared by the owners and eaten outside on tables and chairs. They are especially popular in the evenings and on weekends. (Trinidad and Jamaica also have rum shops, but they are mainly for drinking.)

As in other tropical countries, fresh fruit and fruit juices are sold at street-side stands and at markets. Local fruits include bananas, carambola (star fruit), citrus, guava, many varieties of mango, papaya, pineapples, sapodilla, and soursop and such seasonal fruits as ackee (See Jamaica), dunks (a small round yellow-orange tart fruit), fat pork (an astringent plum-like fruit), and tropical plums. Coconut water is available everywhere. Roasted corn is another street-side favorite.

## Major Street Foods

### Flying Fish

Barbados's national dish is flying fish with coucou. Flying fish (marine fish belonging to the *Exocoetidae* family) is the national symbol of Barbados and appears on coins and official documents. The fish that is eaten is typically around 8–10 inches long. It is boned and filleted, soaked in lime juice, and salted, washed, coated with a Bajan seasoning mix (salt, onion, chives, scotch bonnet pepper, thyme, marjoram), then dipped in flour, egg, and breadcrumbs, and fried. *Steak fish* is the term for any larger fish that is cut into steak and fried or grilled. Fish fries are held on weekends in fishing villages, especially on Friday evenings. Hot sauce made with scotch bonnet peppers is a standard accompaniment.

To make coucou, a dish of African origin, the vendor boils chopped up okra, then gradually adds cornmeal, and stirs it with a coucou stick until it thickens. It is poured into a bowl to set and then inverted onto a plate where it is served with

stewed salt fish, flying fish, stewed pig or calf’s liver (called harslit), or any kind of stew. Coucou can also be made from breadfruit and green bananas. All three varieties are sold from lunch vans, stalls, and at rum shops.

## Bake n’ Fish

A Trinidadian marine import is bake n’ fish. Marlin is used instead of shark, and the bake is a popular Caribbean bread that is fried, not baked. Other Trinidadian imports are *buljol*, a mixture of boiled and shredded salt cod, tomatoes, onions, and hot pepper served with bakes or biscuits; aloo (potato) pie; *rotis*; and doubles.

## Meat

The favorite street-food meat is barbecued chicken marinated in tomato, soy sauces, and herbs and spices. A uniquely Bajan specialty is barbecued pig tails that are pickled in brine, then boiled and barbecued with a spicy sauce.

## Sandwiches

Cutter is the prototypical Bajan sandwich. A roll of oval-shaped crusty bread, called *salt bread*, is cut in half and filled with whatever the customers like: ham, cheese, corned beef, fried egg, fried flying fish, or breaded chicken. Two fish cakes sandwiched in salt bread is called a “bread and two.” The fish cakes are made from boiled salted cod, flour, and onions beaten into a batter and deep-fried. They are one of the most widely available snacks at street-side stalls and rum shops.

## Pudding and Souse

An extremely popular street food of British origin is pudding and souse. It is sold in rum shops throughout Barbados, but only on Saturdays. The souse is made from various parts of a pig that are boiled and pickled in lime juice, onion, cucumber, and parsley, while the pudding is a combination of grated sweet potato, green pepper, onions, thyme, and other ingredients that are baked. Traditionally, the pudding was stuffed into a pig’s intestine.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Belarus

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Belarus, or White Russia, is located in the heart of Eastern Europe. It is landlocked, surrounded by Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Russia, and Ukraine. Most of the country is composed of lowlands, rolling hills, and marshes, and about 40 percent of it is covered by forests. The most famous of these is the ancient World Heritage site, *Belovezhskaya Pushcha* (*Puszcza Białowieńska* in Polish), which straddles the border between the two countries. Major rivers run through Belarus, the Pripyat, Dnieper, and Neman among them, and there are many tributary streams and lakes throughout the land. Because of its location, Belarus's climate tends to be cooler in summer than its neighbors and cold in winter. Climate and the nature of the land mean that wheat is not the main grain crop, but rye, barley, oats, and buckwheat are more important. Baked goods made from these grains are significant to Belarusian culinary culture.

The Belarusian language is closely related to Russian and Ukrainian and so are most of its people. Belarus was part of the Kievan state (centered on today's Ukraine) from the 9th to 13th centuries. When Mongols destroyed the kingdom, much of Belarus was controlled by a Polish–Lithuanian kingdom during which time foods and people moved across their mutual borders. In the late 18th century, Belarus became part of the Russian Empire, after that the Soviet Union, and in 1991, an independent country. Polish and Lithuanian-speaking people still live in Belarus, but Russian is far more important culturally. Partly this is because the Belarusian government still follows the Soviet model, and also most Belarusians belong to Russian Orthodox Church. Festivals and the foods that go with them are like those in Russia and the Ukraine. Jews were once an important group in Belarus. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a great many left for United States taking their foodways with them and leaving their influence on Belarusian foods. Many chicken dishes and herring, for example, originated with Belarusian Jews.

Breads, potatoes, and mushrooms are at the center of Belarus food traditions. Upon entering someone's house, a guest is immediately offered a piece of bread with salt. The bread might be a sour dough rye or a mixed grain type. The Belarusian expression is “Bread is lord in the home.” Hearty soups are a core meal in Belarus and are made from various ingredients, including beets, potatoes, meats, sorrel, and mushrooms. They can be accompanied by the Belarusian dumpling called *kalduny*. These are close to Russian *pelmeni* but are made of dough wrappers, filled with chopped meats, cabbage, cheese, or mushrooms, and then boiled. Potatoes are everywhere—Belarusians sometimes called *bulbashi* or “potato people.” As Belarusians say, “potatoes are as good as bread.” *Dranniki* is the classic dish, fried pancakes made from grated potatoes mixed with onions pork fat, sour milk, and salt. *Oladyi* (pancakes, cakes) made from grated, drained potatoes mixed



with flour, eggs, and pork fat are often stuffed with mushrooms, chopped meats, shredded fish, or hard-boiled eggs.

## Major Street Foods

### Pancakes and Dumplings

These dishes and similar ones are served as street food, near public markets, and at public events. The most popular are *bliny*, originally a Russian dish (the Belarusian *nalistniki* is similar). These are thin pancakes, crepes really, made from a batter, cooked on a hot griddle, and then stuffed with various fillings, from pickled cabbage, to jams and even caviar. True Belarusian *blini* are made with oat flour and are called *raschinnie*. There are even hot dogs wrapped in soft dough, like sausage rolls. But without pickled cabbage and sour cream, no dish is complete. Street foods also include soups, sausages, sandwiches (in cities), packaged candies—often sold by vendors from trays—and soft drinks. Products made by such international soft drink companies as Coca Cola are widely available. The most traditional drink is kvas, which is made from old rye bread mixed with yeast, sugar, and water and allowed to ferment overnight. The result is a sparkling, refreshing drink, especially when served cold.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## Belgium

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Belgium is a small, prosperous country in northwestern Europe. Lying between France on the south, Germany on the east, and the Netherlands to the north, the country has a surprisingly diverse geography. The coastal lowlands provide rich pasture lands for the country’s fine cheeses. A belt of higher lands in the middle are good for agriculture (about 27% of the country is farmland). The southeast hold the famous Ardennes Mountains, heavily wooded, but home to religious abbeys that make famous beer and cheeses. Beer is one of Belgium’s characteristic products, sold and enjoyed worldwide.

Belgium is composed of two distinct linguistic groups. In the south are French speakers, called Walloons by their neighbors who speak a form of Dutch called Flemish. The country is mainly bilingual, and, like the Dutch, large numbers speak

English. The names of towns, cities, and foods can be either French or Flemish, but are usually the latter, such as *Frieten*.

## Major Street Foods

### ***Frieten Met Mayonnaise* (French-Fried Potatoes with Mayonnaise)**

The most popular street food in Belgium is *Frieten*, or what Americans call “French fries.” The “French” refers to the cutting technique; these fries are potatoes cut in small wedges. It is not that Americans discovered fries in France; Americans became familiar with fries in Belgium during the World Wars. However, the French do claim to have first made and sold them at the Pont Neuf in Paris, although they are still searching for the inventor and the proof of this. The Belgian history of *frieten* starts with an oral legend (from Jo Gérard, 1781) that says fries came to existence in the late 17th century in the southern part of Belgium. Inhabitants from the cities surrounding the River Meuse had a tradition of frying little fish caught from the river. When weather conditions were not appropriate to fish, they cut potatoes into the shape of little fish and fried them. That is the story that Gérard’s great-grandfather used to tell. Unfortunately, he never wrote it down, and no sources exist to confirm this beautiful legend. In fact, potatoes came to Belgium only in the 18th century, and many doubt if ordinary Belgians could afford what was in the 17th century very expensive cooking oil for frying potatoes.

But written proof and even pictures show fries being made in Belgium in the second half of the 19th century. And so were the *Frietkoten* where they were sold. A *Frietkot* or fry shack is a small stall on the street that sells fries with different kinds of sauces. Laws required that the first fry shacks had to disappear at night, and only after World War II were they allowed to have a fixed position on the streets. Today some of these traditional fry shacks remain, but they are no bigger than a little hut with no place to sit. Many modern fry places are housed in units that resemble fast-food chains. That is because in the last few decades, local governments have begun to enforce strict hygiene regulations. Some think the traditional stall can be dangerous (for fire, or explosions), others believe they are too ugly, especially when standing next to a historical building (which for the fry shacks are the best spots, of course). Still, simplicity is the charm of a true fry shack according to most Belgians. And even if it has become more difficult for the traditional stalls to continue to exist, no one believes that they will ever fully disappear.

Big or small, fry shacks today all sell fries with a range of sauces and other fried foods (mainly fried meat). However, no Belgian will leave a fry shack without a pack of traditional fries, and the traditional Belgian way to eat fries is with mayonnaise, a sauce made from egg yolks and oil.

In terms of healthy food, they are the nutritionist’s worst enemy. Full of carbohydrates and fat, they are not the best choice. Still, most Belgians eat them about once a week. They are cheap and very filling, which makes them accessible for the rich and poor; they are tasty, and they are part of Belgium’s history.

### ***Brusselse Wafels* (Belgian Waffles)**

Belgians are also known for *Brusselse Wafels* or waffles. The history of this sweet baked dough with a squared pattern goes back a very long time. Baking dough between plates was already common among the ancient Greeks. In the 13th century, a goldsmith refined this technique by making metal molds to bake patterned dough. And that is when the *wafela*, which is French for honeycomb—referring to the squared pattern of the waffles—came into existence. The first waffles were produced in France, followed by the Netherlands and Germany, which are all neighbors to Belgium. It is only in the late 19th century that recipes of “Brussels Waffles” started to appear in household cookbooks (e.g., Cauderlier’s book on sweet pastries that appeared in the late 19th century) and in pamphlets sold at fairs. Because eating waffles was and is very popular during fairs, it is a street food for special occasions. One of the most famous vendors of waffles at fairs was (and still is) Max, named after Maximilien Consael, who opened up his stall in 1856. It is then that the famous Brussels waffles were born.

*Brusselse Wafels* should not be confused with their sweeter variant: *Luikse Wafels*, or waffles from Liege, a town in the Southern part of Belgium. According to legend—though written proof is not existent—these emerged already in the 18th century when the prince of Liege asked his chef to prepare him a sweet dish with sugar. Little pieces of sugar were added to the waffle dough, and the prince loved them.



Waffle seller in a typical waffle stand in Brussels, Belgium. (Kobby Dagan/Dreamstime.com)

Although still popular today, *Luikse Wafels* are different. Not just because of the difference in the amount of sugar used, but also because of their shape: Brussels waffles have 20 holes, and Liege waffles have 24.

### ***Oliebollen/Smoutebollen* (Fried Dough Balls)**

Also popular at fairs in Belgium are *Oliebollen* or *smoutebollen*, which consist of sweet dough fried in oil or lard (*smout*). Basically they are a mix of *Frieten* (fried) and *Wafels* (sweet dough). In terms of ingredients and preparation, they can be compared with doughnuts, but they have a different shape, small balls (the size of a golf ball). Similar to fries, the traditional way to serve them is in a paper cone. They are not served with mayonnaise, but with lots of powdered sugar.

Similar to waffles, *smoutebollen* are traditional street foods for special occasions. They are popular at New Year, but can also be found at fairs throughout the year and are especially popular on *Vette Dinsdag* (Fat Tuesday, or Mardi Gras), the day before Lent when people fast.

Today *smoutebollen* are still most popular at fairs, and some stalls sell them together with waffles and fries. Because they have become popular with tourists, they are also outside the context of festivities, but they are not as common as waffles and fries, which can be easily found in every major city.

## **Other Street Foods**

### ***Gentse (Gestreken) Mastellen* (Ghent Sandwiches)**

A traditional, though less known, street food from Ghent, a lovely city in the north of Belgium, is *Gentse Mastellen*. *Mastellen* are sweet breads, comparable with a sandwich with a hint of cinnamon, and shaped like a bagel or doughnut. They emerged in Ghent about a century ago when Carmelites started to produce them for daily consumption. The tradition began in the 12th century when one of the bishops of Ghent installed a holy day (St. Hubert's Day on November 3) to protect his people using *mastellen*. People would bring them to morning church, and they would be blessed: bakers still do it. A blessed *mastel* supposedly protects people from diseases like rabies.

*Mastellen* became popular street foods at the *Patersholfeesten*, a three-day outdoor festival that takes place in the second weekend of August in a part of Ghent known as the *Patershol*. The *mastellen* are sold as *Gestreken Mastellen*, which literally means “ironed mastels” and that is exactly what they are, at least in their traditional fashion. Until a couple decades ago, they were made by ladies from a traditional bakery in that area. They filled the *mastel* with sugar and flattened them using a warm iron. Today the original bakery no longer exists, but the ironed mastels have remained popular. Perhaps a little too popular, because

to cater the high demands, they are nowadays made using the big irons they also use for warm sandwiches.

### ***Geutelingen* from Elst (Pancakes)**

Another regional street food from Belgium that is quite well known is *Geutelingen*. They are similar to pancakes, but baked on stone in a wood oven. Similar to other street foods in Belgium, *Geutelingen* are food for special occasions; they are traditionally made and eaten around Candlemas (February 2). On that day, people also tend to eat regular pancakes. Pancakes are easier to make than these *Geutelingen*, which require people to take their dough to a place with a wood-fired oven or to the home of someone who owns one.

Until the first decades of the 20th century, these *Geutelingen* were common across Belgium, but they started to disappear in the late 1930s except in Elst, a city in the north of Belgium, where the tradition was kept alive. In 1981, a special committee was even installed to guard this tradition. Ever since the tradition has become very popular, people travel to Elst especially for these *Geutelingen* and other festivities.

### ***Karekollen* (Whelks)**

*Karekollen* or whelks (small sea snails) are another well-known street food. They are popular not only along the coastline, but also in the capital of Belgium, Brussels, where Mie Caracol has been selling these delicacies for more than 50 years. She is based in one of the old neighborhoods of Brussels called the “Marollen.” Born in a family that ran amusement attractions at fairs, she started selling *Karekollen* at these fairs. Nowadays her stand is at the corner of the Hoogstraat and Vossenstraat, selling the best *Karekollen* in town (and worldwide according to some). Her recipe remains top secret.

*Charlotte De Backer*

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## **Brazil**

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With 190 million people and an area of 3.3 million square miles, Brazil (officially the Federative Republic of Brazil) is South America’s largest country. Its variety of geography and climates, ranging from green mountains along the Atlantic Ocean

to the Amazon forest in the north and a central plateau cut with hundreds of rivers, is reflected in its cuisine.

Discovered by the Portuguese explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500, Brazil was first called *Ilha de Santa Cruz* (Saint Cross Island.) At the time, it was inhabited by around 5 million people with different cultures and languages. For many years, the Portuguese made little attempt to move inland or colonize the vast territory. But in the mid-16th century, the king of Portugal decided to install a central government and divided the territory into hereditary captaincies. New arrivals cut down vast swathes of forests, initially for brazilwood, later sugarcane, cotton, and tobacco plantations. Coffee and cocoa beans were introduced and grown for export. Other products from Portugal's vast overseas empire included rice, bananas, and coconuts. The colonists in turn were introduced to native products, including corn, manioc, chili peppers, peanuts, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, and various beans. Today rice, beans, and manioc flour are the main staples of the Brazilian diet.

To work on the plantations, the Portuguese brought slaves from Western Africa. In 1850, the transportation of slaves was banned, and in 1888, slavery was abolished in Brazil. Today around 47 percent of Brazilians are of European origin (mainly Portuguese, Spanish, German, and Italian), 51 percent are of African or mixed descent, plus a small percentage of Asians and indigenous people.

Street food first appeared in the villages of the southeast, where modern São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are located, and the northeast, where Brazil's first capital Salvador in Bahia State was located. It was initially sold by the *negros de ganho*, slaves who had expertise in cooking. Usually they would have to give all their profits to their owners, but eventually, it became a way of social advancement that could even lead to freedom if the slave managed to save enough money to buy his manumission.

After slavery was abolished, selling street food became a major source of employment for freed slaves. The first Brazilian street food was *angu*, boiled and mashed cornmeal seasoned with salt if the latter was available. Other dishes sold outdoors were fried fish with mashed fruits (a staple among indigenous peoples); stews made with local vegetables, boiled and mashed cassava, and palm fruits, such as the *pupunha*; fresh fruits, including banana and pineapple; and *sonhos* ("dreams" in Portuguese), round sweet deep-fried treats made from sugar and flour (mainly cassava). Dishes from the African repertoire became the quintessence of street food in Salvador and throughout Brazil. The most famous is *acarajé*, a fritter made from peeled black-eyed peas formed into a ball and then deep-fried in palm oil.

Today everyone can be seen eating street food in Brazil, although its major appeal is for low-salary workers. For people who live in the poorest areas in big cities and work far away from home, it is the only way to eat, since they have to have lunch in the city centers close to their jobs. Moreover, as in many other countries,

selling street food provides employment for immigrants and newcomers who do not have regular jobs.

In cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, street food is sold mainly during lunchtime and rush hours. For breakfast, Brazilians stop by the *padarias* (bakeries) and *botequins* (informal snack bars) that for many years were run by recent Portuguese immigrants. Here customers drink coffee and eat bread, snacks, and sandwiches. *Botequins* are a trademark of Rio, serving coffee and bread for breakfast, beer and typical appetizers all day long, such as *Bolinho de bacalhau* (codfish fritters), boiled eggs, fried fish, and *pastel* (thin pastry folded like a paper, filled with meat, ham, cheese). Many of these are officially sanctioned, unlike the vendors who sell without licenses in the poorer parts of cities.

Street-food stalls were built informally in city markets, at bus and subway terminals, and at street fairs. Early in the morning, one can see a vendor selling *mingau de tapioca* or *mingau de maisena* (tapioca and cornstarch porridge) in train stations in many big cities. In São Paulo, Brazil's largest city, there is no law protecting street-food vendors, who are harassed by the police. Food trucks are prohibited by the public health sanitary code. Meanwhile, street food is becoming trendy, and many chefs occasionally become street-food vendors, trying to help to legalize the activity.

Brazil's street-food culture is so rich that a person would have to travel all over the country to appreciate it. The most important street-food scenes are located outside of the capital São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. A famous street-food venue is the Ver-o-Peso Fish Market and streets around it in Belém in the State of Pará. It is known for its *açai com peixe*—açai berries pulverized into a porridge and served with toasted cassava flour and grilled fish. Mercado Modelo in Salvador is famous for its *comida de santo*, African inspired dishes such as *acarajé* and *cuscuz* (couscous), which are dedicated to African deities on worship days. Japanese *sobás* are popular dishes in street fairs in Campo Grande, capital of Mato Grosso do Sul. The coastal cities of the Northeast are famous for *queijo de coalho* (curd cheese) melted on a skewer that is sold by ambulatory vendors.

## Major Street Foods

### *Acarajé*

Originating in West Africa, the local word for this dish is *akará*, which roughly means food with beans or ball of fire. It is made with cooked and mashed black-eyed peas seasoned with salt and chopped onions, then molded into the shape of a large scone and deep-fried in palm oil in a wok-like pan in front of the customer. In the variation called *abará*, the same ingredients are boiled instead of deep-fried. Many authors trace its origins to Middle Eastern falafels, which were brought to Africa by Arabs.

Customers waiting in the line to buy an *acarajé* must tell the vendor whether they want it “hot” or “cold.” In Bahia, the seasonings are quite heavy: Locals always order “hot,” which is slang for “lots of pepper,” usually a hot sauce made with *pimenta-malagueta* or *piri-piri* and palm oil.

*Acarajé* is a fixture in the Afro-Brazilian religious traditions of *Candomblé*. The presentation is theatrical even when it is not part of a religious ceremony. Many vendors are *baianas*, women born in the state of Bahia, who wear white shawls and turbans, round starched skirts, bracelets, and colorful necklaces. Their image often appears in local artwork.

Inexpensive and rich, *acarajé* is the most popular street food in Salvador, the original capital of Colonial Brazil, where many African slaves lived. It is sold in stalls near historical churches and street fairs, in Pelourinho, the old historic center, and beaches like Itapuã and Praia do Forte. It is also eaten in almost every city in Bahia State and some parts of Rio de Janeiro, where it has a sweeter taste thanks to the addition of coconut milk. *Acarajé* also has different flavors depending on the filling. The most common is *Vatapá*, a yellow porridge made with palm oil, bread, coconut milk, okra as a thickener, and coriander, topped with dried shrimps and dressed with pepper sauce.

### ***Milho verde/pamonha***

These two dishes made from sweet corn are found everywhere in Brazil except the North, where the cassava culture dominates. *Milho verde* is an ear of corn cooked in boiling water and eaten off its cob, usually sprinkled with salt and butter. It is sold near train stations, factories, and commercial centers of São Paulo year-round (even on the elegant Avenida Paulista, the core of businesses’ headquarters) but is especially popular in autumn and winter.

*Pamonha* resembles Mexican *tamale*: Fresh corn is grated and juiced to make a paste called *pamonha*, which is wrapped in fresh corn husk, tied with a string and cooked in boiling water. *Pamonhas* can be savory or sweet, and filled with cheese, sausage, minced meat, or served plain.

Like many other dishes made from sweet corn, *pamonha* and *milho verde* are popular in a traditional Catholic festival in June, called *Festa Junina*.

### **Pastel**

Pastels are thin pastry envelopes wrapped around assorted fillings, then deep-fried in vegetable oil. They are sold in every street market in cities in south eastern and central Brazil. The usual accompaniment is *garapa*, sugarcane juice crushed in an electric mill served by itself or mixed with pineapple juice or lemonade.

*Pastel* is commonly filled with savory ingredients: mozzarella cheese or *queijo prato*, a local soft cheese, and tomatoes; ham and cheese slices; ground meat with



sliced boiled eggs and parsley; chicken with *catupiry* (an industrial cream cheese with low acidity); or even small cooked or fried shrimps. Recent years have seen the appearance of sweet pastels with fillings made from banana and chocolate, *goiabada* (thick guava jam) and cheese from Minas Gerais, and *doce de leite* (a caramel-like sweet made with sugar and milk).

As the pastels are fried, they fill with air, but customers can never tell if the vendor has really filled the envelope. Street-food stalls in markets are known for their *pastel de vento* (with just air inside, no filling), which should be cheaper than the filled ones. There are various explanations of its origin. One is that pastels were introduced by Japanese and Chinese immigrants in stalls and *lanchonetes*, small establishments that serve sandwiches and snacks. A variation that may be of Italian origin is the *fogazza*, a calzone-like pastry made of wheat flour, stuffed with cheese and meat, and fried or baked.

## Tacacá

This thick rich soup is popular in northern Brazil, especially cities in the states of Acre, Amazonas, and Para. It is one of the last indigenous foods available in urban surroundings and is sold mainly by women. The broth, called *tucupi*, is made from fermented cassava juice, gum starch (also from cassava), and dried shrimp stock mixed with *jambu* (paracress), a green vegetable that makes lips and tongue tingle.



Fast food stand in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Pietrach/Dreamstime.com)

The soup is served hot in bowls and is especially popular on torrid afternoons and at sunset. *Tucupi* is used as a broth for many dishes in northern Brazil, including duck.

## Other Street Foods

### Tapioca

A kind of pancake made from cassava (manioc) starch and water, tapioca is a staple street food in markets in the north and eastern Brazil. A culinary heritage from the indigenous people, the starch is made by pulping, filtering, and centrifuging the tuberous root. The flour ranges from a fine powder (also called *polvilho*, sweet or sour) to coarser granules or pearls. The tapioca dough is spread in a thin layer on a frying pan; filled with dried shrimps, jerky, cheese, coconut chips, chocolate, fruits, or *doce de leite* (a caramel-like sweet made with sugar and milk); and then folded over like a crepe.

According to local lore, the *tapioqueiras* (tapioca women vendors) must use a charcoal fire and frying pan instead of stoves and flat grills. The city of Fortaleza in the state of Ceará has Center of Tapioqueiras, with dozens of stalls. In Olinda city, good *tapiocas* are sold in front of the Cathedral Church (Sé). In Recife, capital of the State of Pernambuco, tapioca can be found at city central streets like Dantas Barreto, Guararapes, and Conde da Boa Vista, near the 13 de Maio Park entrances, or around soccer stadiums on match days.

### Sobá

The second largest Japanese community in Brazil lives around Pantanal biome, one of the most impressive wetlands in the world, in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul in western Brazil. They came mostly from the Okinawa archipelago and brought with them sobá, a thin noodle made with buckwheat. The noodles are served in a bowl with dashi, a characteristic Japanese soup stock made from fish shavings and kombu seaweed, topped with seaweed; seasoned with soy sauce and mirin (rice wine); and sometimes topped with a raw egg. Since there is no buckwheat in Brazil, cooks adapted the recipe to wheat flour. In Campo Grande, the capital of Mato Grosso do Sul, vendors make sobá with imported noodles in Feira Central, the city's central market.

### Cocada

*Cocada* is a traditional Brazilian sweet made with coconut milk, egg yolks, and sweetened condensed milk that is sold by walking vendors. It is associated with poor neighborhoods in large cities. In Bahia, it is traditionally paired with *acarajé*. Usually *cocada* is prepared indoors, particularly the hard chewy version that has a fudge-like texture and is filled with coconut chunks. However, a few vendors cook

the mixture on the spot in gas stoves and large pans to make a version that is eaten like a creamy pudding. Another variety is made with toasted coconut that gives it a brownish color and called *quebra-queixo* (“jaw breaker”) because of its thickness.

## Hot Dogs

Over the last four decades, some street foods have been imported from outside, notably the hot dog, which has been transformed into a rich sandwich with all kinds of fillings and toppings. The meat is industrial sausages made with pork, poultry, and leftovers. A plain version consisting only of bread and sausage is found in cities of the northeast. In São Paulo, street vendors add cheese, corn niblets, canned peas, mashed potatoes, shoestring potatoes, and condiments such as vinaigrette, mayonnaise, ketchup, and mustard.

## Queijo de Coalho (Cheese on Skewers)

A firm but light cheese is threaded on wooden skewers, much like a kabob and semi-melted in portable charcoal ovens. It is sold by walking vendors on the beaches of northeastern Brazil. It is often topped with *melaço*, reduced sugarcane extract.

## Espetinho (Kabobs)

Skewers of meat grilled over a fire are available everywhere in Brazil. The meat is usually beef seasoned with salt, but sometimes the skewers are threaded with vegetables (corn, tomato, carrot, and broccoli), sausages, or cheaper cuts of chicken. They are served with vinaigrette and a slice of French bread.

*Olívia Fraga*

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# C

## Canada

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Although it is the world's second largest country in area after Russia, Canada is also one of the least densely populated with only 35 million people. The original settlers came from the British Isles and France, but since the 1960s, the government has pursued an active immigration policy with the result that Canada is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world. In the 21st century, the main immigrant groups are South Asians, Chinese, Caribbeans, and Filipinos. The largest concentrations of immigrants are in Toronto and Vancouver, where nearly half of the residents are born outside of Canada.

Since many immigrants come from countries with vibrant street-food cultures, Canadian cities might be expected to be beehives of street-food activity. But until very recently, this was not the case. Stringent local and provincial regulations have long prevented or restricted the selling of food on the streets, the only exceptions being hot dogs and sausages sold by street vendors and in ice-cream trucks. Today Vancouver and Calgary are in the forefront of the street-food movement.

### Toronto

The largest city in Canada and the fifth most populous city in North America, the Greater Toronto area has an ethnically diverse population of around 6 million people. The largest ethnic groups are South Asians (12% of the population), Chinese (11.4%), black (8.4%), Filipino (4.1%), and Latin Americans (2.6%). This diversity is reflected in the large number of restaurants, food courts, and malls featuring their cuisine but not in Toronto's street food. Until recently, the only street foods that could be legally sold from carts were hot dogs and sausages served in buns.

In 2009, pressure to serve a more varied and nutritious street food resulted in the introduction of a program called Toronto à la Cart, which licensed eight vendors to serve Indian, Korean, and Greek food. However, because they were forced to use very expensive city-approved equipment and pay thousands of dollars in annual licensing fees, only one of the carts made a profit and the program was scrapped. In 2011, minor modifications were made to the law allowing hot dog vendors to sell fruits, prepackaged salads, and tabbouleh salad, soups, precooked veggie burgers, bagels, and coffee and teas.

Despite this, in 2011 and 2012, a number of gourmet food trucks appeared on the scene. However, the regulations determining where they can vend and what they can serve are complicated. First, they can sell from the curbside only in the area that used to be the city of Toronto (and not the outlying boroughs and suburbs), and even then they need a Designed Vending Area permit. A truck can hold only one permit at a time, so it can't go from place to place. Subsequently, a moratorium was imposed on granting permits in the downtown core of the city, which limits their range. The other option is to vend on private property, such as parking lots, subject to the permission of the property owner and the appropriate zoning. A positive note is that the Toronto Public Health department has not imposed any special restrictions on the kind of food they can sell, regarding them basically as a restaurant on wheels. This means that they can sell anything a restaurant can.

A working group has been formed to review the issue and make a recommendation to the Toronto City Council. A Street food Vendors association has been formed and is actively promoting the cause.

As of fall 2012, around a dozen food trucks were operating in the Toronto area, among them Buster's Sea Cove (shrimp and fish tacos and lobster rolls); Rome'n Chariot (such Italian-Canadian specialties as beef and veal meatballs, veal and eggplant sandwiches); Hogtown Smoke (tacos and such international street hawker specialties as Kim-Jong Ill's in chicken wings); Caplansky's (Jewish deli food); Smoke's Poutinerie (poutine, fries served with gravy and cheddar cheese curd); the Feisty Jack (a modern take on traditional British foods such as shepherd's pie and chicken tikka masala); and Pretty Sweet Cupcakes. Food trucks often assemble in one place for a special festival or occasion, such as the Toronto Film Festival. A truck serving Chinese food called Wokkin' On Wheels is a favorite of students at the University of Toronto.

## Hot Dogs

Most of the hot dogs sold by Toronto vendors are all beef, many of them made by Champs or Shopsy's, a company founded in 1922 to feed garment workers. The large wieners (usually 6 or 5 to the pound) are griddled until brown, then placed on a yellow bun and topped with condiments that sit on a rack at the side of the hot dog cart. They include mustard, ketchup, corn relish, sliced mushrooms, bacon bits, olives, and sometimes sriracha sauce.

## Vancouver

Vancouver is Canada's main success story when it comes to street food, with more than 100 carts and trucks now in operation. Vancouver's only legal street foods used to be chestnuts, hot dogs, and popcorn, but in 2009, things changed in response

to a growing interest in street food, motivated in part by the coming Winter Olympics in February 2010 and the expected influx of tourists. A panel of food professionals, members of the public, and city council members identified suitable sites for food carts and invited proposals that were then peer reviewed. They were judged not only on taste but also on their healthfulness, making Vancouver perhaps the first city in the world to impose healthy food regulations for vendors.

In 2010, the city held a lottery for 17 licenses, which drew some 800 entries from about 400 vendors. The program continued to expand, and by mid-2012, there were 103 stationary food carts, most of them concentrated in a five-square block area of downtown. The vendors range from mobile handcarts to converted ice-cream vans and full-fledged trucks. In the city, street vendors, including food trucks, have the right to conduct business within 60 meters of an existing business that has the same type of food, food concept, or theme. In the predominantly Chinese suburb of Richmond, which has many restaurants, the distance is extended to 200 meters.

The food served at these carts and trucks reflects Vancouver's diversity: Mexican, Korean, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Greek, Middle Eastern, Chinese, Indian, Salvadoran, Thai, British-Canadian, BBQ, and so on. The most famous are Japadog where two women serve fusion hot dogs with Japanese ingredients, Fresh Local Wild whose chef catches most of the fish he cooks, and Vij's Railway Express by one of Canada's leading chefs, who serves such Indian fusion dishes as blueberry lassi, coconut ginger green beans, and halibut cheek curry.

## Montreal

Although it is the largest city in French-speaking Canada, famous for its sophisticated restaurants, Jewish delis, and, thanks to more recent immigration, restaurants serving North African food, Montreal has had no street food since 1947 when its mayor banned them outright (along with chicken coops and newspaper boxes) because he considered the carts ugly. The only exception has been hot dogs.

Although there is pressure to lift this ban, currently street food can be sold only on special occasions, such as festivals (such as the city's famous jazz and comedy festivals), organized street closings, or any other event where cars are not allowed to pass through. There are now trucks operating in Montreal, including La Mangeoire, which serves gourmet sandwiches; Pas d'Cochon dans mon Salon, which specializes in pulled pork sandwiches; Crepe-moi, selling sweet and salty crepes; and Takoyaki, famous for its octopus balls.

## Other Cities

Thanks to a push by the mayor, the city of Calgary put in place a pilot program in 2011 that was so successful that the city streamlined the process of licensing

food trucks and even created a Web site announcing their location (<http://www.yycfoodtrucks.com>) Today there are 30 food trucks operating, serving such dishes as gelatos (Fiasco Gelato), Eastern Europe-inspired dishes (Perogy Boyz), tacos (Los Compadres Mexican), gluten-free French fries (Fries and Dolls), naans and taco (the Naaco Truck), and potato dishes (Spud Mobeel).

Ottawa, Canada's capital, has taken a more cautious approach. At one point, there were 100 spots for vendors in downtown Ottawa, but in the mid-1990s, the city began refusing to issue new licenses and the number declined to 44. In October 2012, the government approved somewhat loser rules for 20 new spots but stipulates that they must be within 150 feet of any kind of an existing "food premise." There is also a push to limit the food served to healthy items. Meanwhile, the city's dozen or so food trucks set up in parking lots and other privately owned locations.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## The Caucasus: Armenia and Georgia

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The Caucasus Range is a complex group of mountains that covers the isthmus between Europe (Russia) on its northwest, Central Asia on the northwest, and southwest Asia (Turkey and Iran) on the south. To the east is the Caspian Sea, and on the west, the Black Sea. Lands and climates are highly diverse, ranging from Alpine and Continental (warm summers and cold winters) in its mountains (the highest in Europe) to subtropical on the flat coastal areas of the Black Sea. The Caucasus has considerable biodiversity with plants, animals, and fungi that remain from the last Ice Age in the pristine mountains that have not been economically developed. Elsewhere, agriculture and mining are ancient industries that date to the early Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. What people eat today goes back to the natural environment and their history.

The peoples and languages of the Caucasus are as multilayered as the lands in which they live. Some 50 ethnic groups live there speaking as many languages and dialects. Some speak Turkic languages, others Indo-European, while still others

belong to a unique group called Kartvelian. Georgian is the best known of these, *Kartvelebi* being what Georgians call themselves. The Caucasus is politically divided into almost 20 political entities, the largest in area being Republics of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Dagestan. They differ in language, culture, and religion: Dagestan, one of the republics of the Russian Federation, alone has 33 different language groups. Religion also plays an important role in culture, with several branches of Christianity and several Muslim groups having adherents. Naturally religious practices affect what foods people eat and the kinds of holidays and festivals they observe.

The food history of the Caucasus countries is as complex as the peoples and landscapes. Empires, kingdoms, and states rose and fell, peoples migrated in from central and southwest Asia and Europe, but all the cuisines were based on indigenous foodstuffs. Agriculture and herding have been practiced in the region for more than 8,000 years. Sheep and goats pastured in the highlands have long provided meat and milk, while wheat has been there from the beginning. Eggplants, chickpeas, lentils, beans, many kinds of greens, nuts, and mushrooms are important ingredients. Viticulture is almost as old. Georgia, for instance, has had a grape wine industry for the past 6,000 years and grows some 500 different grape varieties. In ancient times, grape juice was placed in large ceramic containers set in the ground. The same technique is used to this day for much of the wine production. Georgian wine is famous and by far the most popular in Russia, as is Georgian cuisine. When New World foods appeared, farmers of the Caucasus took to them. Tomatoes, potatoes, corn, and peppers are all important elements of local cuisines.

Early Christians converted the northern Caucasus, so that today Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches hold sway. Their festivals, many of which resemble Greek and Russian Orthodox practices, feature red-dyed Easter eggs and sweetened *paska* bread. The mountains were home to wild boar, which were hunted, and today pork is eaten in the Christian nations. The southern part of the Caucasus is mainly Muslim, dating to the early days of Islam and later to the time when Turkish empires extended into the area. Naturally, Muslim festivals such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr are important, and dishes similar to Middle Eastern ones such as ground chickpeas are widely consumed. Since Muslims do not eat pork, characteristic meats are lamb, mutton, beef, and chicken.

Since the Caucasus was under the control of the Soviet Union from the 1920s to the 1990s (some of the northern regions are still part of the Russian Federation), many traditional foodways disappeared due to modernization introduced in that period. However, much of the home cooking tradition remained intact, and local industries such as cheese and wine making survived. These and local ingredients remain the base for today's street-food traditions. But another kind of modernization has taken root: fast food. McDonald's, for instance, has opened outlets in



Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, and international soft drink companies sell products in the region.

## Major Street Foods

Whatever the divisions among peoples, some dishes are universal. By far, the most famous is *shashlik*, followed by flatbreads and cheese dishes.

### *Shashlik* or *Shashlyk*

*Shashlik* is a shish kebab made in much the same way as it is in the Middle East and around the world. Chunks of meat are marinated overnight in lemon juice with salt and onions, threaded onto skewers with onions and usually peppers and tomatoes, and then grilled over open grills. *Shashlik* can be made with lamb, beef, or pork, depending on the region: in Georgia, pork is popular, while in mainly Muslim Dagestan, it is made with lamb. Almost any meat or vegetable can be skewered. In Azerbaijan, on the Caspian Sea coast, sturgeon appears, served with a pomegranate sauce, while in Georgia, *tkemali*, a popular plum sauce is an accompaniment. There is hardly a public event in the Caucasus that does not have *shashlik*, and it is a standard street food.

### *Khachapuri*

*Khachapuri* is perhaps the signature dish of Georgia's cuisine. It is a raised bread filled with shredded cheeses, mixed with eggs and seasonings, and baked. It is served in slices in the same way as pizza. *Khachapuri* has a number of regional variations, each closely identified with its native region. Because it is so savory and filling, it is spread across the Caucasus nations and is sold as street food and takeout in many areas.

### *Kinkali*, *Hingal*, *Manti*

*Kinkali* (in Georgian), *hingal* (in Dagestan), or *manti* (in Armenia) is a steamed dumpling that is thought to have originated in Georgia. In reality, *kinkali* is one of a range of filled dumplings that can be found across central Asia into east Asia and westward into Eastern Europe and perhaps even Italy. *Kinkali* is made by stretching out a thin sheet of dough, cutting it into circles and filling them with chopped meats, cheese, or vegetables. The dumpling is closed into a swirl shape and then steamed. There are many kinds of fillings depending on local tastes. Spicy lamb, sheep or strong goat cheese, or chopped vegetables such as onion, garlic, and red

peppers or walnuts are common variations. Yogurt is often served as a topping and sumac as a herb flavoring.

### ***Döner Kebabs***

*Döner kebabs* have spread from Turkey across the globe. Various meats are packed into an upright spit and slowly roasted over an open fire. Thin slices of meat are cut from the spit, laid on flatbreads, and served with condiments. *Döner kebabs* are often accompanied by chopped cucumbers, tomatoes, onions, or potatoes and served with sauces, some yogurt based.

### **Stuffed Leaves**

Cabbage or grape leaves are used as wrappers for portable foods. Called *dolma* in Greece, grape leaves are often stuffed with cold cooked rice mixed with nuts and raisins or finely chopped cooked meats. Cabbage leaves are also prepared this way. Armenian cookery is famous for such preparations that are served as street food and at festivals such as religious holidays.

### ***Churchkheles, Chuchkhel***

Walnuts are important in the cuisines of the Caucasus. *Churchkheles* (Georgian) or *Chuchkhel* (Armenian) are long strings of walnuts or other nuts, such as hazel nuts, dipped into a thick grape juice (*must*) for a long time and then hung up to dry. The sweet nuts become sweet and chewy and are a favorite treat.

### **Fruits and Corn**

Countries such as Georgia and Armenia grow many kinds of fruits that are sold from stands and in markets. Quinces, apples, peaches (dried peaches are a Georgian specialty), plums (also featured in many preparations and as brandy), apricots, pears, pomegranates, and grapes are popular. Grilled corn on the cob is also a feature of roadside stands.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## Central Africa

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Although there is no tradition of restaurant culture in Central Africa, street food is omnipresent and has a long history, dating back to at least several centuries. When Europeans first landed on Central African shores at the end of the 15th century, they encountered an active trading system with many local markets. On these markets, provisions ready for consumption could be bought. *Chikwangué*, for instance, was reported to be sold in 1698 at markets around Malebo Pool, a widening of the Congo River that separates the current capitals of the Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Central Africa is a large geographical area that includes Cameroon, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, the DRC, and the Republic of the Congo. Most of the mentioned countries border the equatorial rain forest, home to a highly diversified fauna and flora and crisscrossed by numerous waterways, of which the Congo River is the most important. In the era of colonization, most of Central Africa was French territory, still to be seen in numerous



Beignets being sold by a street vendor in the Democratic Republic of Congo. (Courtesy of Birgit Ricquier)

imported French foods, especially baked goods. The DRC, however, was Belgian, Equatorial Guinea was Spanish, and part of Cameroon was British.

Street foods serve different functions. Beignets or baguettes are purchased for breakfast, peanuts for a snack during the day, *chikwangué* for journey provisions, and roasted meat to accompany drinks at night. Street foods are found in markets and in strategically placed food stalls. Not only big cities like Brazzaville (capital of Congo) and Libreville (capital of Gabon) count numerous markets, but also in the countryside, markets are organized. Yafira, for instance, situated on the Lomami River, a tributary of the Congo River, is a village with a weekly market. People from distant places as far as Isangi and even Kisangani arrive there by boat for both trade and leisure. In towns and villages, street foods may also be purchased at food stalls. In Congo, food stalls are placed in village centers along the main roads, as well as near railway stations. Some foods, like fritters, are sold door-to-door. Women go around the village in the morning with a bucket or large bowl filled with fritters. Considering that the production of food is mostly a female activity, it is evident that food vendors are usually women. They do not even need to organize sales. Often, women prepare more food than needed, for instance, *chikwangué*, and sell the surplus on shelves near the road.

Food stalls are generally simple in structure, consisting of no more than a table and a roof. Foodstuffs may also be spread on a plastic sheet on the floor. Considering the sanitary issues of markets, having mostly dirt floors and lacking an organized garbage collection, selling food on sheets provides a serious health hazard. Certain street foods, like diverse wrapped foods, are prepared in advance and are displayed as such. Others are prepared on the spot. Such is the case of peanuts, which are roasted in front of the customers. Vendors of beignets also fry their goods in the market.

## Major Street Foods

### Wraps

A popular Central African cooking method is to wrap ingredients in leaves and to boil or steam the package. Another cooking method is to bake the wrap on the ashes of the fire. The wrap may be formed with banana leaves, but more often, leaves of wild plants are used, for instance, from aroid species. Several street foods are wraps. The most important wrapped food in Central Africa is *chikwangué* or *bâton de manioc*, a wrap of cassava paste. Not only can it be served as the starch component of the principal meal of the day, but it also has the advantage of being durable and easily transportable. Therefore, it is often a traveler's companion and may be purchased at food stalls in villages along the main roads. The preparation of *chikwangué* is an elaborate process, taking several days, sometimes even longer than

one week. The bitter cassava tubers are first soaked in order to remove the toxins. The subsequent process varies. In some regions, the tubers are pounded, wrapped, and boiled. In the west of the DRC and the south of the Congo, the preparation consists of different steps of kneading and steaming. Women often make more than needed for the household and sell their surplus to passersby or to their neighbors.

In the south of the Congo, another wrap is made with cassava. This wrap contains a mixture of bitter cassava paste, peanut butter, and optionally, chilies for a spicier version. It may be preserved several days and, therefore, is ideal for journeys. There are several variations on the recipe—for instance, using sweet instead of bitter cassava—and the dish carries various names. In Kunyi, it is called *mbala-mpinda*, literally “yam-peanut.” A popular Cameroonian wrap is *koki*, a paste of cowpeas or other legumes, palm oil, and chilies. Wraps may also contain fish. To give a few examples, raw fish can be seasoned, wrapped, and baked on the ashes of the fire. Smoked fish can be added to a paste of gourd seeds, wrapped and steamed. These wraps are known along the Congo River as *libóké*, a Lingála word for “wrap.”

## Beignets

Beignets or fritters are sold in markets throughout Central Africa. Women fry the beignets on the spot, seated on stools next to a pot of boiling oil placed over a fire. In the countryside, vendors may go around the village with a bucket of beignets. The ingredients vary. Beignets may be a mixture of wheat flour, yeast, sugar, vanilla sugar, and water. However, along the Congo River, beignets are prepared with cassava flour, plantains, and/or rice flour. Sometimes, they are seasoned with chilies. In the same region, beignets are fried in palm oil, giving them a distinct flavor.

## Peanuts

Although treated as nuts in culinary practice, peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*) are legumes that produce fruit underground. Peanuts originated in tropical South America and were introduced by the Portuguese in Central Africa as part of the “Columbian Exchange.” Because of their similarity to the local Bambara groundnut (*Vigna subterranea*), peanuts were quickly adopted. Curiously, Central African slaves brought peanuts and

their use to North America. The denominations *pinda(r)* and *gober*, from (*m*) *pinda* and *nguba*, respectively, suggest that these slaves were Kongo. In Central Africa, peanuts are generally processed into peanut butter, an important seasoning of stews but today also spread on *baguettes*. Peanuts are also eaten raw, boiled, or roasted as a snack and are often paired with a cassava preparation to form a meal.

Other ingredients include maize and lemon. Beignets may be served alone or with peanut butter. In Cameroon, a common combination is beignets with beans.

## Peanuts

Peanuts are a popular snack food throughout Central Africa. They may be eaten raw, boiled, or roasted. In markets, they are mostly sold roasted to serve as a snack. Peanuts are often paired with cassava preparations to form a quick meal.

## Other Street Foods

### Baguettes and Coffee

Breakfast is often a takeaway occasion. Food stalls in towns and villages sell baguettes, an inheritance from the ex-colonizer, which was France for most Central African countries. These baguettes may be sold with various spreads. Peanut butter is very popular, but baguettes may also be smeared with a portion of The Laughing Cow®, a soft spreadable cheese. In Gabon, *pain chocolaté* is the name for a baguette with chocolate spread. These baguettes are often served with coffee or tea. Coffee is generally a mixture of coffee powder, milk powder, sugar, and hot water. Tea may be a herbal infusion, for instance, verbena, again mixed with milk powder and sugar.

### *Cabri* or *Mícopo*

A street food that is popular in the evening when people gather for drinks is roasted goat meat and onion served with chili powder and optionally slices of *chikwangué*. This snack is called *cabri* (French for “goat”) in Kinshasa and *mícopo* in Lubumbashi, the second city of the DRC.

### Cassava

Like peanuts, cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) is an American crop brought from Brazil to Central Africa by the Portuguese. The tuber was introduced in the third decade of the 17th century. No later than 1698, Italian travelers purchased the complex cassava product “coanche,” or *chikwangué*, on markets at the Malebo Pool. This cassava wrap was sold to supply the

caravans that traded slaves, among other goods. Cassava thus was first transformed into a trade good. Only one century later did the tuber become a possible ingredient of the staple starch food *fufu*, a thick porridge. The American plant has grown in popularity ever since. In Central Africa, cassava leaves are prepared as well, a use that is rare in the Americas.

A number of fruits are sold as a snack. Examples include oranges, which may be peeled for you, and (dessert) bananas. Coconut pieces form another small snack. European-style biscuits are sold in tiny plastic bags. A final example of street foods is skewers of shrimps that are sold on the beach at the Atlantic Ocean.

*Birgit Ricquier*

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## Central America (Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama)

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Central America is the long, thin land bridge that connects the North and South American continents. An isthmus, it stretches from southern Mexico to Colombia, is bounded by the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, and includes the countries of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Belize, and Panama. The land is filled with mountains, interspersed with fertile valleys, and is volcanically active. Climates vary in the isthmus depending on altitude, but most of it is tropical with a number of forests and amazingly diverse biosystems. Ecotourism in the tropical areas has become a large industry, especially in Costa Rica.

Central America was part of the ancient Mesoamerican civilizations. Guatemala, for instance, was the heartland of the ancient Mayas. When Spain conquered the whole region, these civilizations disappeared, but the peoples speaking many native languages did not. Today, almost all the countries have large indigenous populations. Most also have peoples of African descent that date from the days of slavery. Mixed together, Central American peoples created "Creole" cultures including their foods. Based on native corn, and beans, to which imported rice has been added, along with Asian bananas (plantains) and native yucca, fish, and European food

animals, the cuisines of the region are truly *mestizo* or mixed. The classic *pupusa* of El Salvador and neighboring regions is one of them.

## Belize

Belize (once called British Honduras) is the second smallest country in Central America in landmass, the smallest in population, yet is one of the most diverse in several ways. Subtropical in climate with a wet and a dry season, the country is located on the Caribbean Sea with Mexico to the north and Guatemala to the south and west. Most of Belize is low-lying country. The long coastline is often swampy with lagoons and many small islands (cays). A coral barrier reef, the world's second longest, protects the coast from high sea tides, but not from frequent destructive hurricanes. The northern region is also lowland and heavily forested with old-growth hardwoods such as mahogany. These have been harvested for many years and have been a staple of the Belizean economy. For such a small country, there is surprising biodiversity. From drier low mountains and plateau in the south to the northern and coastal forests, there are broad ranges of flora and fauna. Belize is recognized as one of the world's ecological treasures, and as a result, ecotourism is a growing part of their economy.

Although small in numbers, around 350,000 people, Belize has as varied a population as any in Central America. Originally most of Belize was part of the Mayan



A roadside fruit stall displays a variety of tropical fruits, such as papayas, pineapples, watermelons, mangoes and other fruit wrapped in plastic bags in San Jose, Costa Rica. (Happywanderer/Dreamstime.com)



culture sphere, the largest center being Caracol in the southern Maya Mountains. The longest occupied center is Lamanai in the northern Orange Walk area dating from about 1500 BCE to 1650 CE. The Spanish who arrived in 1540 never conquered all of Belize, leaving the coastal areas open to British pirates, merchants, and settlers in the 17th and 18th centuries. Baymen, as the sailors were called, brought African slaves, both settling in coastal towns and villages, and mixing together with native peoples into new ethnic groups. In the 19th century, British Honduras became a Crown Colony and became fully independent in 1981.

Belize comprises several major ethnic groups, and each has contributed to the country's street food. About a quarter of the population are Kriols (or Creoles), who are mixtures of the English Baymen and Africans or people of African descent who came from nearby Caribbean islands such as Jamaica. Their language, a version of English, is the most widely spoken dialect. Garingu (the singular is Garifuna like Belize's neighbors in Nicaragua and Honduras) are peoples of African, Carib, and Arawak (natives of the Caribbean islands) ancestry. Their language comes from the latter groups with French, English, and Spanish thrown in. Their food is more closely related to Caribbean cuisine than others. Mestizos are mixtures of Spaniards and native Indian people and are about 30 percent of the population. Many came from neighboring Guatemala to escape long civil wars fought there. Other peoples include English, Germans, East Indians, Chinese, and four different Mayan-speaking people. Although English is the official language, most people also speak two or three languages according to their ethnic group.

Like other countries in Central America, beans (red beans rather than black) and rice form the core of Belizean cuisine, but with much more seafood and a lot more spice. Chicken, pork, and beef are widely eaten, cow's foot stew being a Belizean specialty. Festival foods eaten in public celebrations can also include iguana, peccaries, and even large wild rodents—gibnut and agouti (called *hicatee*). Gibnut and agouti are often fried and served from food stands in many places in the country's interior towns. Stews and barbecued meats are also sold from stands in every town and city. Curried chicken, brought from India via the Caribbean islands, is also a standard dish. On the coast, fried conch fritters and *escabeche* (fresh fish cooked in lime juice or vinegar) are very popular. For seafood at public events, there is a national lobster festival held every year where massive numbers of crustaceans are boiled and grilled. Plantains and manioc, mashed and made into flatbreads or dumplings (*bundiga*), are a Garingu addition to the food scene. In all cases of food, a very hot sauce is served, usually made from habanero (called *Scotch Bonnet* in Jamaica) peppers.

Street vendors almost always have panades or small meat pies, and tamales. Some tamales are like those in Mexico and Central America: corn dough stuffed with cooked meats, wrapped in corn or banana leaves, and steamed. Others, called *dukunu*, are often meatless and made with fresh corn. Tacos, made with corn or

flour tortillas, are common, made with chicken or other meats, and topped with vinegar-laced cabbage, just as they are even in North America. Garnaches, another import from Spanish Central America, are corn tortillas that are fried and loaded with fried beans and shredded cheese.

In a subtropical country, fruits are abundant on the streets. Mango, guava, craboo (or nance—a small yellow fruit with a strong smell), sapote, oranges, pineapples, and lots of coconuts—from meat to milk—are always to be found on vendors: stands, carts, and baskets.

Warm weather calls for beverages. Horchata, a rice drink, comes from the Mestizo tradition. Tamarind (called *Jamaica* in Spanish) is widely used in a non-alcoholic beverage as are soft drinks. Beer is very popular, much of it Jamaican. Being a former British colony, tea is a staple drink as is coffee since Belize and its neighbors produce high-quality beans.

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## Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a Central American nation that shares many geographical and ethnic characteristics with its neighbors. Nicaragua borders the country to the north, and Panama is the southern border. Like these two countries, Costa Rica is subtropical in climate and has highly diverse ecological zones. On the east, the Caribbean coast was always low, swampy land while the Pacific area of Guanacaste Province is a tourist destination because of its excellent beaches. The center of Costa Rica rises from open grasslands to mountains, some of which are spectacular, potentially active volcanoes. The interior valleys are fertile farmlands, while the grasslands support cattle ranching. Some of the country's ancient forests have been cut to make more pasture for cattle, much of that for American fast-food chains. Yet Costa Rica has become a world leader in preserving its pristine ecosystems with their great varieties of flora and fauna through large national parks. Ecotourism is now a major part of the economy.

Most Costa Ricans or “Ticos” are of European or mixed European and indigenous heritage. This began with the Spanish colonization in the mid-16th century and was followed by more European immigrants in the succeeding centuries. There are some native peoples living in the country and a number of people of

African descent who are found on the east coast. Most of these came from the Caribbean islands in the 19th and 20th centuries to work in construction and agriculture. Many of them speak English as well as the national language, Spanish. Refugees from political wars in Nicaragua have settled in large numbers in the northern part of the country. Each group has contributed to Costa Rica's cuisine.

Costa Ricans' characteristic dish is *gallo pinto* or rice and beans. Only in the north, among Nicaraguans, does corn play a significant role in most people's food. Versions differ from region to region. In most of the country, the beans are black and in equal measure to the rice, but among the coastal people with ties to the Caribbean countries, red beans are used, along with coconut milk and spicy red peppers. In other parts of the country, the rice and beans are toasted or cooked with lots of oil. No matter how it is cooked, *gallo pinto* appears as street food, in restaurants, and in home kitchens.

Many Costa Ricans eat street food, especially in such cities as San Jose, the capital, from small open-fronted restaurants called *sodas*. There, such dishes as *gallo pinto* are accompanied by a *picadillo* made from shredded vegetables such as cabbage, chayote, carrots, and even green mangoes. *Gallo pinto* in most of the country might have finely sliced sweet peppers, onions, and lots of cilantro on top. A version of this dish called *casado* ("married") has beans and rice served side by side. Since diners like fried foods, fried plantain slices, or *patacones* are very popular. *Barbudos*, string beans coated in an egg batter and deep-fried, is a Costa Rican specialty. *Pejibayes*, or peach palm, is an important "tico" food that is used in soups and stews. Diners might also find *Mondongo* (tripe soup), *Olla de Carne* (beef stew), chicken stews and soups, and on the coasts *ceviche* (fish cooked in lime juice or vinegar). Tortillas often accompany dishes, and in cities, corn dough-based dishes such as *pupusas* and tacos can be found. Tamales are a customary holiday dish, prepared at home and served to the public at events.

Fruits are among the most common foods sold by vendors. The country produces mangoes, papayas, melons, pineapples, guavas, and bananas. Fruits are sweet, but a special sweet dish is made for the holidays from squash. *Chiverre*, also called *Chilacayote* in Mexico, is cut up and dried. The pieces are then cooked down with sugar to form a very sweet jelly that is eaten on rolls and used in sweet pastries. *Miel de Chiverre* is an Eastertime specialty.

As might be expected from a famous coffee-producing country, coffee is sold everywhere and is widely consumed. Costa Ricans use a drip technique, in which a cloth bag containing the coffee is set in a wooden frame, hot water is poured over it, and then allowed to drip into a pot.

Refrescos are usually fruit juice-based drinks that are found everywhere in the country. They are made by blending fruits with either water or milk, often with

sugar. The most popular flavors are mango, blackberry, carambola (star fruit), papaya, tamarind, and watermelon among others. Bottled soft drinks are also widely drunk, especially colas.

Because of foreign tourism and changing tastes among young people, international fast-food chain restaurants have expanded greatly in Costa Rica, causing some to worry that traditional street food will disappear. Fried chicken chains such as the native Rostipollos and Pollo Campero from Guatemala now compete with Kentucky Fried Chicken and Popeyes. McDonald's (which serves *gallo pinto*), Burger King, Wendy's, Applebee's, Quizno's, and others have all entered the market and are becoming more popular.

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## El Salvador

In territory, El Salvador is one of the smallest countries in Central America, yet with a population of 6 million, it is comparable with its bigger neighbors. Unlike others, the country has no outlet to the Caribbean Sea but faces westward toward the Pacific Ocean. El Salvador has been called “the land of volcanoes” with good reason. Most of the country is mountainous, with extinct and some potentially active volcanoes, covering the interior. The region is quite spectacular, an area where the country's protected biodiversity areas are located, and thus attracts an increasing number of tourists. A narrow strip of fertile land along the coast is where much of the country's population lives, where most of its economic activity is located and where its cities and largest towns are located. The climate is tropical in the lowlands with a bi-seasonal rainy and dry season, but is more temperate in the uplands.

Before the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, the land of El Salvador was occupied by indigenous peoples, mainly the Pipil who spoke a Nahuatl language (related to the Aztecs of Mexico). Only a small fraction remains because so many native people were killed during the conquest and civil wars in the last century. Most Salvadorans are of mixed European and indigenous ancestry, and their language (Spanish) and culture reflect this varied heritage. El Salvador's food is a mixture

of imported and native ingredient, all of which go into what is sold as street food. Corn is the basis of most Salvadoran food, along with beans and rice, yucca, plantains, *loroco* (an edible flower bud that is important in local cuisine), many fruits and vegetables, pork, chicken, seafood, and some beef.

### ***Pupusas***

Corn tortillas are eaten at all meals, but one form of them is El Salvador's most famous dish. *Pupusas* are thick tortillas made from cornmeal dough and almost always made by hand on the spot. Once toasted on a flat griddle, the pupusa is cut horizontally and stuffed with variety of fillings. The most popular is a semi-soft melting cheese (*quesillo*) and a ground pork mixture (*chicharon*). Other fillings range from fried beans, cheese, and *loroco*, to chopped vegetables such as chayote. The pupusa is usually served with a shredded pickled cabbage and chili salad called *curtido*. Two variants are made from rice and mashed plantains. Salvadorans who have migrated to other countries in the region and to the United States brought *pupusas* with them. They are now popular in all of these places, and in North America are sold in food trucks and Hispanic markets.

Other common Salvadoran street foods are *yuca frita* and *panes relLENos*. *Yuca frita* is composed of slices of yucca (or cassava) that is deep-fried (sometimes just boiled) and served with *curtido* and sometimes ground pork, or fried pork cracklings, and fried sardines. *Panes relLENos*, or stuffed breads, are sandwiches made with marinated spiced turkey that is shredded and packed into the rolls. Other street foods include empanadas (stuffed pastries that can be savory or sweet), tamales, plain fried yucca, and fried plantains. Because of its location on the Pacific Ocean, Salvadorans eat a lot of seafood cooked in many ways. It is often prepared in soups and stews that are sold in small open-fronted restaurants and by some street vendors.

### **Fruit**

Fruits are widely available, especially bananas, papayas, mangoes, pineapples, and others. Salvadorans also like fruit drinks. Some are bottled soft drinks, others are *minutas*, milk based and mixed in blenders with fruits, *refrescos*—such a limeade—and *horchata*, a sweetened and spiced rice drink. *Shuco* is like Mexican atole, corn dough mixed with water and flavors such as fruits. Coconuts are very common and, when punctured for the insertion of a straw, make for a highly nutritious and refreshing drink. Of course, coffee is universal because El Salvador has long been a major coffee-producing nation.

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## Guatemala

Guatemala lies in Central America, or Mesoamerica, the region located between Mexico to the north, Honduras and El Salvador to the south. It is a mountainous country with only small coastal plains along the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. With a tropical climate in the lowlands and cooler temperatures in the highlands, Guatemala is a perfect place to raise bananas and among the world's best coffees.

In pre-Hispanic times, Guatemala was within the Mayan culture zone. Today, some of the world's most famous Mayan archaeological sites (e.g., Tikal) are found in the northern parts of the country. When that civilization collapsed in the 9th and 10th centuries AD, the people did not disappear. Instead, they remained in villages scattered across the country. Mayan speakers are still there, mainly in the highlands, and represent about 40 percent of the population. Most of the rest are mestizos, or people of mixed European and indigenous heritage.

Guatemala City is the capital, and it is here that visitors will find the greatest numbers of street-food vendors. Antigua, near the capital, is also well known for its open-air food scene. Like other emerging nations, the vendors come from the lower economic levels of society, many of them indigenous people who have come to the city to find employment. Street food certainly serves to nourish poor people, but it is also enjoyed by all Guatemalans and the large numbers of tourists who visit each year.

Guatemalan food resembles Mexican cuisine in many ways, but it is far less spicy. For instance, *Elotes*, or grilled corn on the cob, are the most common food sold by street vendors, but unlike Mexico, they are not eaten with chili powder sprinkled on them, but a mild salsa. Tortilla-based foods are also popular, like tacos in Mexico. Here, they are often deep-fried and then stuffed with chopped meats or beans. Black beans are a staple and can be eaten whole, or *revueltas* (meaning mixed and fried), or even liquefied in a blender. Most of these dishes are topped with chopped cabbage, cheese, and often guacamole. A smaller version of tacos, called *garnachas*, is made this way, only with meats and cheese. Most people agree that locally made cheeses are one of the best things about Guatemalan food, and they are commonly served in tortillas. Cheese and meat are also fillings for the *pupusa*. This is a dish imported from neighboring El Salvador, a thick tortilla that is split and stuffed with various ingredients, especially cheese.

Since Guatemalan cuisine has a good many meat stews in it, tortillas accompany a bowl of beef, chicken, or pork stew. Of meats, chicken is the most popular, though a turkey stew called *kakik* from the north can also be found in markets and at stands.

Drinks always accompany street food. The most Guatemalan of all are *atoles*. Similar to Mexican *atole*, they are made from corn dough mixed with water; only the Guatemalan versions often have ground beans added. Atoles come in many flavors, since fruits can be mixed in, and are a favorite hearty breakfast beverage. Varieties of local fruits are sold by street and market vendors ranging from mangoes, to sapote, papaya, guavas, and melons. If these are not sweet enough, then candies are also available.

Wrapped hard candies are sold cheaply by vendors from trays, the most famous being *Canillitas de leche*, or “little milk legs.” These are made from milk and sugar with vanilla flavoring, boiled down and set out until hardened. Guatemalan candies and desserts are super sweet and include *Tamarindos*, small red balls made from tamarind, marzipan, and *buñuelos* (sugared fried dough) among many others.

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## Honduras

Honduras is one of the more beautiful countries of Central America. It has a long coast along the Caribbean Sea and a much smaller outlet to the Pacific Ocean at the Gulf of Fonseca. Like its neighbors, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua to the south, Honduras has a subtropical climate with a long autumn rainy season. The central part of the country is mountainous, and here temperatures are more temperate. Because of its location and climate, its forested highlands, and swampy southern coastline, Honduras is designated as one of the world’s biodiversity centers. Most of its neighbors share that honor. Unfortunately, deforestation for agricultural purposes is rapidly destroying the country’s old ecological system.

Before the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, Honduras was partly within the Mayan culture zone and also occupied by other tribal groups. One of the greatest Mayan ruins, Copán, in the northern part of the country is a major tourist attraction. Honduran people are mainly a mixture of Spanish and native people, but other

groups are important. Among them are the Garifuna, a mixture of Africans and native peoples, and at least seven Indian peoples. Each has influenced Honduran food, though the country's food is not as complex as other places such as Mexico. Because Honduras is one of the Central America's poorest countries, cheap street food is very important to its peoples.

Honduran cuisine is best known for its many delicious soups and stews, but not for much spiciness. A standard meal, called a *plato tipico*, consists of beans, rice, fried plantains, grilled meat or fish (on the coast), and plenty of flour tortillas. These same ingredients are the basis of street foods.

The most popular street foods are *baleadas* (literally, "shots"). They are large hand-made flour (not corn) tortillas that are often lightly grilled until soft, covered with fried and mashed beans, grated dried aged cheese, or meats, then folded in half and eaten on the spot.

*Pastelitos de Carne* are flour-based dough stuffed with meat and rice or potatoes that are deep-fried. *Burritas* are another favorite, only they are not like the burritos familiar from North American–Mexican foods. Instead, they are two flour tortillas stacked with some meat, fried beans, grated cheese or onions, and avocados on top. The fillings are separated into each tortilla, folded in half, and eaten by hand.

*Enchiladas* in Honduras resemble Mexican tacos, fried corn tortillas filled with shredded meats but more often fried beans and cheese. These are usually served with chopped hard-boiled eggs on top and dosed with ketchup. Tamales are large and often filled with bits of meat with some bone in them (which have to be picked out) and steamed in banana leaves.

*Tajadas* are probably the most widely eaten food in the country. They are nothing more than thinly sliced plantain slices that are deep-fried until crisp. They can also be made from unripe sweet bananas, and even ripe ones. *Tajadas* are not only street and snack food but commonly accompany main dishes served at home and in restaurants. One special dish is served more often in restaurants than on the street, but the ingredients are the same: beans and melted cheese in a clay pot served with tortilla chips.

Its climate and land make Honduras a fruit-producing country, all of which are sold by street vendors. Pineapples are very popular as are bananas, guavas, coconuts, and mangoes.

In recent years, fast-food chains have opened in Honduras, especially in the capital, Tegucigalpa. They serve both Honduran dishes and others from North America such as hamburgers, fried chicken, and pizza. All serve soft drinks that are popular across the world, from colas to fruit flavors. Visitors can still enjoy traditional street foods, though many young people will frequent the international chain restaurants.

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## Nicaragua

Nicaragua is the largest country in Central America and one of the most ecologically diverse. Situated between Honduras to the north and Costa Rica on the south, Nicaragua has three major ecological zones. Most of the almost 6 million Nicaraguans live in the fertile western Pacific Ocean coastal region where the climate is warm with a long rainy season. The capital, Managua, is located here as is a scenic wonder, Lake Nicaragua. The largest lake in Central America, it has become a major tourist attraction. Central Nicaragua is mountainous with a temperate climate, forests and even active volcanic and seismic activity. On the east, the tropical Caribbean coast differs from the rest of the country. Most of it is known as the Mosquito or Moskito Coast, and a good deal of it is swampy and forested with thin populations. Fishing and timber have always been important industries, yet this is the poorest part of Central America’s poorest nation.

Nicaragua was occupied by peoples related to either Mayan or Nahuatl (Aztecs) cultural and linguistic groups. Other groups lived along the eastern coast. The Spanish conquest saw the founding of the hemisphere’s oldest Spanish city, Granada (1524), and a mixing of peoples. Today, a majority of the population is of mixed European and indigenous ancestry with Spanish the official language. The Caribbean coast differs because of the presence of Africans originally brought in as slaves and because of English trading ports and influence. About 9 percent of Nicaraguans are of African or mixed African-indigenous ancestry and many speak English. Alongside them are native peoples such as the well-known Moskito Indians. Each contributed to Nicaragua’s cuisine. Nicaraguan cuisine is heavy on beans, corn, rice, grilled meats and fish, plantains, and bananas, plus many fruits and vegetables.

Like most of Central America, south of Mexico spicy hot foods are not traditional. *Gallo Pinto* is the national dish, eaten at home, in restaurants, and on the streets. It is a simple combination of cooked rice and red beans boiled with garlic then mixed together, often with strips of sweet peppers, and fried in oil. It is eaten at all times of the day, a filling and fairly nutritious, if oily, dish.

*Nacatamal* is the Nicaraguan version of the tamale. A dough made of ground corn and butter is spread on a banana leaf and filled with chopped meat—pork or chicken usually—chopped tomato and onion, and perhaps rice or potatoes. Folded into packets, they are steamed or boiled for several hours before serving.

*Vigorón* is a popular national dish that was invented in the lovely old city of Granada. It is one of Nicaragua's few spicy hot dishes. A banana leaf is spread on a plate and then covered with thick slices of boiled *yuca* (also called cassava), *chicharrones* (fried pork skin, or cracklings), and a salad made of shredded pickled cabbage. A chili-infused vinegar sauce is usually available for sprinkling. There are also nonmeat versions.

*Quesillo* is a common street food. This is a fresh string cheese that is wrapped in a thick flour tortilla with pickled onions, sour cream, and some salt sprinkled on top.

*Tostones* are like those in nearby Honduras. Slices of plantains that are fried, pounded flat, and fried again until browned. They are often served with salt and garlic sauce. *Vaho* is another food wrapped in a banana leaf and steamed. The filling is thickly sliced yucca and meat covered with a vinegared cabbage and tomato salad.

*Indio Viejo* (old Indian) is made by boiling meat with onions, garlic, sweet peppers, and tomato. Once cooked, some tortillas are put in the water and mixed until well broken up and soft. The meat, vegetables, and tortilla pieces are then shredded and fried with the vegetables and some orange juice. On Sundays especially, food stands sell *Mondongo*. This is a very hearty stew or soup made from beef tripe and bones that are slow cooked with *yuca*, peppers, cabbage, chayote, tomatoes, and other vegetables and finally thickened with ground rice. Fresh fruits are always available from street vendors, including papaya, mango, jocote (something like a cherry), pineapple, and the ubiquitous banana and plantain. Drinks also reflect the country's tropical nature. Fresh fruit drinks mixed with milk or whipped into slurries are everywhere. And, as a country with international connections, worldwide soft drinks are common, especially colas. One very local, traditional beverage is called Pinol or Pinolillo. It is made from ground cornmeal mixed with cacao (chocolate) and then diluted with water or milk. Pinol can be served warm or cold and is often taken at breakfast time because it is so hearty and filling.

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## Panama

Panama is the southernmost country on the long isthmus that connects North and South Americas. It is a narrow country with long coastlines along the Caribbean

Sea on the north and the Pacific Ocean on the south. The climate is tropical with a long rainy season, making for tropical forests and fauna that are unique to the country—its 900 species are the world’s highest number. Only about 7 percent of the land is arable because Panama is mostly mountainous with some rolling uplands and fairly flat coastlines. The varied landforms make for different economic activities: cattle ranching on the meadowlands, coffee in higher elevations, fruit production, and lots of fishing on both coasts. Panama supplies North Americans with bananas, coffee, and fish, especially shrimp.

Panama’s nickname is the “Crossroads of the Americas” because of its location and history. Various indigenous peoples occupied Panama and nearby Colombia for at least 10,000 years. Living in villages with sophisticated pottery and weaving techniques, they practiced small-scale agriculture and hunting-collecting ways of life.

Today, about 10 percent of Panama’s population are indigenous peoples, some of whom live traditional ways of life. Most Panamanians are of mixed European-indigenous heritage with a good number of Afro-Caribbean descent. Spaniards arrived in the early 16th century, the most famous of whom was Vasco Núñez de Balboa, the first European to have seen the Pacific Ocean from the New World side. Africans were first brought to Panama to work in agriculture—sugarcane and banana plantations—and soon mixed with native and Europeans to form a mestizo population.

Today, there are strong ties between Panamanians on the Caribbean coast and other countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, and Jamaica. There is also a large Chinese population, most of who came to work on the economic engine in the country, the Panama Canal. The canal, started in 1903, is one of the greatest engineering feats in human history and has been responsible for a good deal of Panama’s ethnic mixture.

Panamanian street food is heavily influenced by both indigenous foods and those brought by immigrants. Grilling is very popular, often done over old metal barrels or small grills set up on stands. *Carne en palito* (meat on a stick) are pieces of beef, pork, or chicken threaded on wooden skewers and roasted over an open fire. They are served with a fresh green sauce. Some vendors make a more elaborate version called *brochetas*, really kebabs with onion, green peppers, and tomatoes skewered with the meat. Steamed or fried yucca is often an accompaniment. Other items can be grilled, especially plantains or even ripe bananas that are cooked until the skins blacken and the interiors are succulent. Grilled fish is a standard in coastal areas, especially on the Caribbean side where people use a spicy hot sauce as a condiment.

Taco vendors sell all kinds of these tortilla-based foods. Toasted on a flat griddle, large tortillas are filled with grilled and fried meats, shredded cabbage, and dosed with vinegar-based or spicy sauces. *Bollos*, a kind of boiled tamale,

is a Panamanian specialty, though steamed tamales are almost always served at festivals.

The best places to get street food are at the many small open-fronted eateries called *fondas*. For urban working people, these are the usual lunch places. Most of the foods are fried, but soups and grilled meats are common. *Gallo pinto* (rice and beans), covered with onions and *culantro* (a strongly flavored kind of cilantro), is the standard Panamanian dish.

A chicken soup called *Sancocho* also flavored with onion and *culantro* is very popular, as are stews (one made with pork tails). Hojaldres, or puffy fried breads, are much enjoyed. Most dishes are accompanied by thinly sliced deep-fried plantains. These are also sold by vendors who carry small bags of them on trays.

Meat- or vegetable-filled empanadas are widely consumed. One type, called *carimañola*, is made from mashed yucca, which is then filled with cooked meats and fried. As one might expect, much Panamanian street food is quite greasy, but delicious.

Fresh fruits are everywhere on Panama's city and town streets. Pineapples, cut melons, mango, passion fruit, papayas, and many more make for a refreshing snack in a hot climate. Panamanians usually eat them with vinegar and salt, very much in the old Spanish style. Naturally, drinks are ubiquitous. Panamanian drink a good deal of *chicha*, fresh fruit drinks made from varieties of fruits, and sometimes rice. One variation, *chicheme*, is made from corn dough mixed with sugar and cinnamon. Fresh coconut milk is widely available, made from coconuts cut on the spot by vendors. All the international soft drink companies sell beverages in Panama either from shops, on the street, or in the growing number of international fast-food chains that are well established in Panama City, the capital, and other cities.

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## China

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With more than 1.3 billion people, the People's Republic of China is the world's most populous country. This situation is not new, since China has been the world's most populous political entity for more than 2,000 years. China is also the world's second or fourth largest country in area, covering 3.7 million square miles.

Its territory encompasses the most diverse landforms and climates on the planet. Climates range from cool with cold winters in the north, to tropical in the far south. On the east, running down the coastal areas, are alluvial plains with dense populations and major cities. Further west, the land rises into hills and mountains, cold in the north as they approach the Himalayas in Tibet and very warm in the south near neighboring Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. Sichuan in the southwest is one of the world's great biodiversity centers. North China has a vast desert, the Gobi, dry steppe lands along the Mongolian border, and subarctic areas near Siberia. Great rivers cut through China, the most critical being the Yellow in the north and the Yangtze running from the western mountain through the center of the country. Each area has many subregions because of China's complex topography, and each one has its own culinary traditions.

The Chinese people are mainly one ethnicity, called Han, but within the country are nearly 60 ethnic groups, all speaking different languages. Even within the Han, there are multiple languages and different customs. Because so much of Chinese culture is centered on food, differences among peoples are often expressed in that idiom. Northern Chinese, who come from regions less rich in diverse foods than the south, say that the Cantonese will eat anything with four legs except a table.



A vendor on the night food market in Beijing sells fried silk worms, sea stars, scorpions, and sea horses. (Chrispyphoto/Dreamstime.com)

Chinese food traditions are often divided into four groups: north, east, west, and south. Northwest has been added to the list as Chinese interests and settlements have spread out to the regions near the Mongolian and Central Asian borders. Each area is usually defined by the main foods that are indigenous to it. Rice in the south and millet and wheat in the north are a major distinction. There is considerable diversity within each region as well. Although major geographical divisions are commonly used in Chinese food, food experts in China and abroad recognize eight major culinary traditions. These are characterized by foods and preparation techniques—spicy hot pots in Hunan, for instance—and also fit the regional model.

Due to a cooler and drier climate, the earliest domesticated foods were millet, vegetables such as cabbages, and fish and pigs as main protein sources. About the 12th century BCE, soybeans became domesticated. Soy sauces, made by fermenting beans, and soy curds are absolute musts in Chinese cookery. Much later, probably in the first millennium CE because of Central Asian contacts, wheat became much more important than millet. South of the Yangtze River, rice was domesticated by at least 7,000 BCE. In their richer environments, southerners raised many more fruit and vegetable crops, though pigs and fish were equally important food sources. Ginger, a key ingredient, grew in the south. Today the warmer regions of China still have the most sophisticated cuisines. For historical and ecological reasons, pastoralism never played an important role in the Chinese economy. Milk and milk products were never used, and many Chinese remain lactose intolerant. However, when China's economy opened to the West in the late 1970s, cheese-topped pizza became a popular fast food in cities everywhere.

Chinese farmers have always been open to new ideas and food. When European merchants introduced new foods in the 16th and 17th centuries, they were readily adopted. Chilies, peanuts, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and even tomatoes were incorporated into the food system. Chilies are fundamental flavorings and important vitamin sources in Hunan and Sichuan. Chinese cuisines are products of local conditions and history, and the same applies to street foods.

Medicine and religion have also played a role in what Chinese eat. In traditional Chinese medical thought, the body is divided into four humors: wet, dry, cold, and warm. The four stand alone or are mixed depending on the season and on the human body's response to illnesses. Foods are assigned properties according to the system. When eating street food, Chinese diners often have these principles in mind. Buddhism, once the national religion, influenced cuisine because it recommends vegetarianism and spread the use of soybean curd. Muslims are an important minority, especially in the north and northwest. Since Muslims do not eat pork, lamb and mutton are the meats of choice. In Xian's famous night market where there is an old Muslim community, Han vendors line one side of the market while Muslim stands are on the opposite side. Each serves its own cuisine, and both are very popular.

## History and Definition of Street Foods

China's street food is the most varied and complex in the world. It has been since the first evidence of street food in the cities of the Han Dynasty (206 BC–220 CE). A famous painting from the Southern Sung period (1127–1279 CE) called *Ching Ming Shang He Tu* (Along the River during the Qing Ming Festival) is a complex representation of the everyday hustle and bustle of a capital city with many street-side stalls or ambulant food vendors that remain recognizable today. Marco Polo, who visited Hanzhou in this period, would have seen this amazing scene.

For all its long history, there is no generally used word to express the idea of “street food” in the Chinese language. Instead, there is a somewhat different notion: *xiao* (small) *chi* (to eat, eating), usually translated into English colloquially as “small eats” in the sense of “snacks” or a minor meal. *Xiao chi* refers to the food eaten outside the context of main meals. It is food to stave off hunger between meals and might range from a few nibbles to a full bowl of food. *Xiao chi* such as dumplings may be prepared in one's own kitchen, but it is usually associated with streets and markets where the most varied and abundant selection can be found.

## Methods of Delivery and Preparation

The sheer variety of Chinese street food is astonishing: Sometimes it seems as if the challenge in describing street food in China is identifying a food item that could *not* be found on the street. Until very recent modernization, a constant stream of hawkers on foot would still be seen making regular rounds with seasonal fruits on a basket slung against his back or a tray of pastries and sweetmeats balanced on the head. Each delicacy would be announced by the singsong calls of each vendor that identify his specialty as he wanders through the neighborhood.

The most iconic image of street food in China is that of a man balancing two loads on a bamboo shoulder pole. The shoulder pole is rarely seen today in big cities, but in times past, it was not uncommon to see two evenly balanced large stands made of lightweight bamboo or wood with shelving to hold a brazier of coals for cooking, different ingredients, and even water for washing, as well as a surface for bowls of condiments arrayed for the customer's enjoyment.

Portability—not just of food but of the source for fire for the preparation of food—is a hallmark of street food in China. Quite elaborate loads that include griddles and burners might be balanced today on the two sides of a motorcycle or bike. Often they are transported on small wooden carts or wheelbarrows very much like those shown in the Sung Dynasty scroll. Bread-baking tandoors, small charcoal grills, and pots of simmering water over which steaming baskets could be stacked are still seen on the street. This economy of space is also remarkable.

At the most, there might be a long worktable and perhaps several plastic tables for the client to enjoy his food. In simpler arrangements, food is eaten standing up or in a typical deep squat. Mobile vendors might even bring along low stackable plastic stools to make eating a bit more comfortable. A makeshift cloth or plastic tarp hung on portable bamboo poles provides protection from scorching sun or rain.

For all its association with convenience, street food represents a distinct form of urban pleasure. There is a sense of immediacy in going out to search for a favorite vendor. There is enjoyment and gratification in watching the preparation of one's food. The virtuosity and grace required to make many types of street food often rise to the level of street performance or theater. Street food also presents a variety of distractions throughout the day: the constant comings and goings of ambulatory peddlers and the changing parade of roving food carts mark the passing hours of a neighborhood. Carts offering different types of *congees* or holding vats of hot oil to fry crullers (*you tiao*) for breakfast start the morning. By midday, these early vendors would have given way to sellers of noodle soups (*tang mian*) or dumplings (*jiao zi*) or different kinds of sweet or savory pastries. Carts with sweet puddings or iced desserts offer treats to end the day. Street food tend to be very local, and delicacies that can be acquired on a particular street or a corner at specific times of the day become part of the fabric of that neighborhood's everyday life and come to define its local flavor and character.

Small open-sided shacks such as those around the bridge in the Sung painting or even stalls in dense marketplaces are also sources of street food. But many permanent storefronts open out to the street with an "invisible fourth wall" that could be shuttered at night by sliding movable wooden slats in place (or the shop could be open all night and day). In many such places, food preparation takes place not in some back kitchen but on tables set up on the sidewalk in front. Like tea gardens or coffee shops that are also sources of street food, such places are characterized by a continuity of inside and outside, and provide a constant sense of the passing city.

## Categories of Street Food

### Noodles (*Mian*)

Pasta is made when an unleavened mixture of starch and water is transformed into a solid edible product through contact with heat. This product might be a malleable sheet, which can be folded, or rolled, or cut and broken down into strips. Or it could end up by various means as the strands that we call noodles.

China is famous for its hundreds of varieties of pastas, and every city or region boasts a distinctive shape or form. Historians stress the importance of wheat



flour and rice in the food culture of China, but in fact, pastas are also made from a range of other starches: mung bean, tapioca, pea starch, beans, sweet potato, buckwheat, millet, oat, and even the root of bracken fern. In Fuzhou, noodles are made from pounded fish paste. Specific processing methods as well as the addition of ingredients like egg or lye affect variations in taste and texture. Pastas can be stir fried or served as a cold “salad” (*liang mian*), or simply tossed with a dressing of one’s choice. Noodle soups are accompanied by a seemingly infinite range of toppings: cabbage and pork in one region, different cuts of beef or mutton in another, a few pieces of pickled vegetables in yet a third. Different combination of aromatics (ginger, garlic, star anise, or the spicy and numbing Sichuan peppercorn) and condiments (black vinegar, sesame oil, soybean paste, chili) add even more permutations to the balances of sour, sweet, and spicy flavors.

In the northeastern city of Shenyang, pasta made of mung bean starch (*da la pi*) serves as the base for the beautifully composed salad of precisely cut vegetables that are dressed at the table by tossing with a mixture of pungent mustard and thick sesame paste. Thick sheets of steamed rice flour are studded with bits of meat, scallions, or dried shrimp to be folded into the rolls called *cheong fun* in Cantonese. Among the Hakka people of the east coast, dough of wheat flour is flattened, rolled like a log, and then cut thinly across to form the long strips called *ban mian* or *dao qie mian* (cut noodles). *Dao xiao mian* (knife-sliced noodles) are “shaven” from a block of dough with a curved knife made for the purpose right into the cooking water with breathtakingly rapid and dexterous motions. *La mian* is made by pulling a piece of dough and doubling it continuously with repeated folding and stretching until seemingly hundred thin elastic strands of noodles have been formed. *La mian* is a specialty of the Uyghur minority group of northwestern China. Through internal migration, the noodle soup vendors of the city of Lanzhou in Gansu province are now found in almost all the big cities of China preparing *la mian* right on a street-side stand with show-stopping skill. The spectacular process of making *la mian* raises the preparation of a street food to the level of virtuosic performance and entertainment.

There are yet other ways of making noodles: a dough of buckwheat flour can be pushed with a wooden press through holes and extruded into hot water to form *qiao mian*. The province of Shanxi claims to have a hundred forms of pasta, including the so-called cat-ear pasta (*mao er dou*) or tubes made of oat paste called *you mian kao kao*. Noodles might be as fine as the *misua* of Xiamen in Fujian province, or it could be the thicker round rice noodles called *mi fen*, so beloved in Yunnan, Guizhou, and elsewhere. Noodles can be chewy or slippery in texture. They can be opaque or translucent like the delightful noodles made from sweet potatoes. Noodles can even be made from bean curd skin or a jelly like the *liangfen* of Sichuan.

## Dumplings (*Jiao Zi*)

A sheet of pasta can be cut into smaller pieces to form wrappers for dumplings. In many regions of northern and western China, thick chewy dumplings made of wheat-flour pasta might be eaten at main meals as a staple. These dumplings are related to a whole family of dumplings ranging from Russian pelmeni to Korean *mandoo*. The Uyghurs of Xinjiang make the lamb-stuffed dumpling called *manti*, a word also used throughout Central Asia and Turkey. But dumplings are also a beloved street-food form with countless variations throughout China. Each region boasts distinctive shapes and preferred stuffing: chive, cabbage, radish, pickled vegetables, finely minced beef, mutton, duck, fish, and even such luxurious ingredients as crab roe and dried scallops. Local mushrooms or foraged herbs might be used. For instance, in Shanghai and the bordering province of Jiangsu, a dumpling stuffed with finely minced pork and the herb called shepherd's purse (*qi cai*) is much beloved. Dumplings need not just be savory but might enclose fillings of lotus seed, peanuts, sesame, jujube, and osmanthus flower and sweet bean paste.

*Zheng jiao* are dumplings steamed inside an enclosed bamboo (today, also metal) basket set over simmering water. Steam rises through each tray cooking each layer. It is this efficiency of fuel use and economy of the use of space in cooking (some trays can hold several dozen dumplings at once) that make even large-scale dumpling preparation possible on a portable street-side heat source. Steamed dumplings with a base allowed to brown and crisp in a bit of oil are called *guo tie* or the well-known "potstickers." Dumplings can also be boiled in broth or in water to make *shui jiao* (water dumplings). An exceptionally thin wrapper called *yan pi* (swallow skin) encloses the beloved wonton of Guangdong, often cooked in a soup with roast pork or duck and egg noodles. Chengdu boasts a form similar to the wonton called *chao shou* ("crossed hand," called thus because of the way it is formed). A few of these *chao shou*, boiled, drained, and served in a small bowl with a typical dressing of red chili oil, vinegar, sesame oil, and the numbing Sichuan peppercorn are one of the most beloved street-food snacks in this city.

Apart from wheat-flour pasta, many other starches might be used to form the wrappers. Glutinous rice flour is a very common wrapping ingredient, used in the meat-stuffed *yuan xiao* dumpling balls eaten on special occasions in the Beijing area. The Hakka people are well known for the inventiveness of their wrappings made with dough flavored with taro, pumpkin, and different medicinal or foraged herbs to produce intriguing colors and flavors. Arrowroot flour mixed with wheat starch produces the pearly translucent wrapper for the Cantonese shrimp-and-bamboo-shoot dumplings called *har gow*.

Dumplings might be simple half-moon forms or the rim of the wrapper could be gathered up like a bag and sealed with elaborate pleats to form the familiar

chrysanthemum pattern. Sometimes, the edges of the thin wrapper barely reach the top to enclose the stuffing as in the open-faced *shao mai*. A high level of connoisseur culture distinguishes fineness and delicacy of form, the laboriousness of construction, the fragrance, and deliciousness of the filling. A celebrated example of such specialist items is the time-consuming *xiao long bao* of Shanghai. These are simply called “soup dumplings” because a cube of meat aspic is inserted within before the dumpling is pleated close.

Dumplings are civic symbols and source of pride in their city or region of origin. Dumplings and other street foods can also be tourist attractions. In Xi’an, the tourist is often urged to go enjoy a dumpling banquet featuring dozens of types from the local repertoire. In all the major cities, many shops with the *lao zi hao* (old trademarks) designation started as humble shacks a century or more ago serving a unique or a specially delicious street food. Many are now prosperous (often quite luxurious) restaurants or even chains far removed from the hustle and bustle of the street.

### Stuffed Buns (*Bao Ji, Mantou*)

These steamed dumplings made of yeast-raised wheat flour are a staple of northern cuisine. *Bao* means to bundle and *bao qi lai* means to bundle up. These are two basic specific techniques: bundling the dough up on top and then pleating it to close. Or the bun can be inverted, and the seamless part becomes the top (the seam on the dough having been worked away).

*Bao* is prepared by steaming or baking. Steaming is more important and widely used in northern preparations. In a way, steamed stuffed *bao ji* can be seen as an extension of dumplings. Many of the *bao* forms are the same as southern dumplings and steamed in exactly the same way. In fact, steamed buns often share the same basket with dumplings as they are being prepared. The difference is in the dough: one uses a mantou dough, and the other is made with an unleavened pasta. Some mantou doughs are so thin and fine, especially on tinier buns, that one could almost confuse them for pasta wrapping.

Like *jiao zi*, there are a number of ways to make and use *bao*. In some versions, buns can be steamed, then left to fry and crisp at the bottom in the very manner of potstickers. Such buns are called *shengjian bao ji*. A very common Shanghainese snack is small *mantou* pieces that are deep-fried and then served with condensed milk on the side as a dip. Of baked buns, the most famous example is the *char siu bao* of Guangdong.

### Soups and Stew

Stews are standard street foods, especially if hot pots are counted. Hot pots are usually thought of as hot broth into which food are dipped and cooked by individual

diners. But the term also applies to southwestern dishes from Sichuan and Hunan, where food is steamed in clay vessels in broth or made into soupier stews. Meats, fish, vegetables, and fungi are all stew ingredients.

Soups of every variety are sold by street vendors. A good many are used with dumplings and noodles, and others have other additions to make rich meals. Some are specific to regions. For example, a sweet soymilk soup made with pickles vegetables, vinegar, and bits of pork is a classic northern soup. In Xi'an, *hulatang*, a chili-laced broth, thick with root is a favorite. Some soups, like *hulatang*, are so thick that they can be thought of as soup–stews. Soups, like stews, are regional and made from meats, fish, or vegetables mixtures. Flavorings vary greatly by region, Shanghai and southern styles using five-spice powers and dried meats, fungi, and vegetables for flavoring.

### Crepes, Flatbreads (*Ping*), Griddled Items

Dough made with a different ratio of flour and water and prepared with other cooking methods, including the use of leavening or the addition of oil or fat, yields different kinds of cakes and breads, products quite distinct from pasta.

A thin batter of wheat flour and water is brushed on an extremely hot griddle to form a fine round pancake or crepe used as a wrapper to form what we know as spring rolls. In Fujian province and in the various countries throughout Southeast Asian with Fujianese immigrants, *popiah* (*bao ping* or *run bing* in Mandarin) is a very thin rice flour crepe filled with a tender mix of cooked vegetables, including finely shredded cabbage, carrot, turnip, strips of dried bean curd, pork, and omelet strips. A sprinkling of coarse peanut powder before the crepe is rolled adds flavor and texture.

*Jian bing* is a very common breakfast street food throughout China. A balled-up towel dipped in very wet slurry is used to cover a round metal flattop in a rapid circular motion. The batter (made of wheat flour with the addition of corn or mung bean flour depending on the vendor) sets instantly because of the intense heat. An egg is broken over and brushed over the setting crepe. The large foot and a half diameter crepe, thin, crispy but malleable is brushed with bean paste and chili, sprinkled with chopped green onions or cilantro, and rolled up with a whole savory cruller (*you tiao* or *bao cui*) stuffed into it to make a fat breakfast roll to be eaten on the go.

For *cong you ping* (scallion pancake or flatbread), a wheat-flour dough is rolled flat, brushed with lard or oil, sprinkled with chopped scallions, rolled into a log that is in turn curled into a snail form, and then flattened again to griddle till golden brown. There are many recipe variations for *cong you ping* including the use of two doughs (an oil dough and a water dough, or otherwise an oil dough with a yeast-leavened dough) to achieve alternating effects of flakiness and rise.

A process that includes both steaming and crisping produces the *mo* of Xi'an, a round white flatbread with its hard shell and a soft chewy interior. *Mo* is torn at the table into small pieces to soak in a bowl of mutton soup in *yang rou pao mo*, one of the most famous examples of the halal (*qing zhen*) cookery of the large Muslim population of Xi'an. *Mo* is also slit open and stuffed with either lamb or pork, depending on dietary restrictions to make the sandwich, *rou jia mo*, today considered the most famous street-food item of this city.

Yeast or sourdough leavening is used to make such baked flatbreads such as the many forms of *shao ping*, a fairly fat round that nestles easily in one hand and usually studded all over on the outside with sesame seeds. *Shao ping* is also often slit open to sandwich various kinds of meat including smoked meat (*dong rou*) or braised beef as in *niu rou huo shao*. Or it could enclose a layer of sweet sesame paste such as in *tang huo shao* of Beijing.

Traditionally, baking in China is done in a tandoor, a large clay urn. As in tandoor bread-making, the prepared dough is pressed on the inside of the urn to bake. Among Uyghurs and Han Chinese who are Muslims in northern and western China, a tandoor bread called *nang* serves as a staple food. *Nang* is typically quite large, much thicker than the Indian *naan*, and is closer in form to Central Asian equivalents. It is always intricately stamped on top with distinctive decorative patterns. It is very common to see tables set out on the street stacked high with these hefty bread rounds in the *hutongs* (back-alley neighborhoods) of Beijing. As a tandoor is relatively portable (modern versions encased in metal and set on wheels are often seen today), it is still possible today even in some big cities to see *ping* of various sorts not just being peddled but actually being baked right out on the street.

## Skewers (*Chuan*)

Skewers called *chuan* are a very ancient food. Although central to the food culture of China, we associate skewers and in particular skewers of lamb or mutton (*yang rou chuan*) with the food cultures of the steppes beyond the Great Wall. They are the most prominent street food throughout northern and western China but can also be found in the Muslim quarters of big cities such as Kunming in Yunnan. Typically, such grills are set out right on the street where the fragrant wafting smoke lures the passerby. One has one's choice not just of skewered chunks of meat but also of choice delicacies such as skewered lamb liver or kidney. Lamb skewers are much beloved in Beijing, where locals call them *yang rou chuan'r* (little skewers).

The character for skewers in Chinese is a very visual image: two small rectangles crossed ("skewered") with a vertical line. Skewers aside from mutton skewers are very common street food throughout China. Stalls selling skewers are among the

most typical nighttime street food throughout the country. Typically, such stalls would have a display of two sometimes as many as three dozen raw items already on skewers, ready to be grilled. Each skewer holds a few mouthfuls of food and costs a few cents. The idea is to select a range of different items and take it to the grillmaster to be prepared. There is seemingly no limit to what might be on offer as skewers: offal of different kinds (kidney, intestines), different green vegetables (whole baby bok choy threaded beautifully on skewer), mushrooms, kelp, fish balls, lotus root, different kinds of shellfish, pieces of bean curd, bamboo shoots, quail egg, and many more.

Skewers need not just be grilled. They can be used to hold fish balls while deep-frying out on the street. Fish paste balls (*yu yuan*) are important part of Fukienese food culture: fish balls (or even meat paste balls) *rou yuan* on long skewers and deep-fried.

Another skewered street food can be found in the *malatang* (“hot and numbing soup”) stalls. *Ma la* (numbing and spicy) are considered typical flavors of Sichuan, and *malatang* itself refers to a typical hot pot with these flavors. In recent years, *malatang* stalls have become very popular throughout the country. Instead of having a selection grilled, one would dunk and cook them in a large vat of flavored soup. This is a kind of communal hot pot and bolsters the notion that there is virtually no food in China that could not be found out on the street. *Malatang* setups are also typically found at night as a little snack to end the day.

## Candies, Brittles, Pickles, Nuts, and Fruits

Candymakers are the most colorful of food peddlers. The *tanghulu* man sells candied hawthorn (*san zha*) in long skewers of 8–10 of the little bright red fruits. These skewers are inserted diagonally into holes on a stand that allow the display to flare out decoratively. The stand is usually raised on a high pole so that it seems from afar as if a headdress ornamented with red beads or some fantastical animal were gliding above the crowds. Artisans of dragon beard candy (*long xu tang*) stretch and fold molten sugar repeatedly to create hundreds of very fine silklike candy strands. Other candymakers (called *tang ren*) entertain hordes of fascinated onlookers by drizzling hot caramelized sugar with flamboyant calligraphic strokes to create fragile dragons or phoenix forms. Candy sculptors blow into molten sugar balls to create little dogs or rabbits or other animal glass candies. As with the making of noodles like *la mian* or *dao xiao mian*, virtuosity becomes street performance and spectacle. Such breathtaking displays as these turn the preparation and peddling of street food into theater.

There is an endless procession of nibbles the entire day: malt sugar candies, *ma hua* (sesame sweetmeats), brittles made from different seeds and nuts, candied ginger or winter melon, fried broad beans, all kinds of honeyed fruits or sour

fruit pickles, and pressed sundried persimmon fruits (*qi ping*). There might be iced sweets or noodle-like jellies swimming in sweet syrup on hot days. Roving carts offer freshly roasted chestnuts or hold beautiful samovars dispensing herbal tonics and jellies such as *guilinggao* or a sweet soup made with lotus root powder (*ou fen*) for cold winter days.

By nighttime, carts offering all kinds of sweet dessert soups or puddings could be expected to be found in the same semipermanent spot. One might find *tang yuan* round glutinous rice dumplings swimming in sweet soup. Or soups with jujubes, lotus seeds, white ear fungus, grass jelly, or goji berries. Or a sweet hot sweet congee of purple glutinous rice (*zhi nuo mi*). The famous eight-treasure congee (*ba bao zhou*) is a fortifying mix of red rice, barley, beans, nuts, dried fruit, and so forth. Then there are various sweet puddings called *ni*, which might be made of pounded taro root or sweet potato. A famous pudding of Chengdu is called *san he ni* (three harmony pudding) and is made from pounded sticky rice, black beans, and sesame seeds. These are all treats to mark the end of the passing day.

## Regional Specialties

### Western and Central China

This region includes Sichuan, Hubei, Hunan, and, to the south east, Yunnan.

The provinces of Sichuan and Hunan are the centers of western Chinese cuisine. With good rainfall and varied landforms, Sichuan has varieties of ingredients ranging from river fish to such forest products as bamboo, mushrooms, and nuts. It is famous for its peppercorns, which are not black pepper, but belong to the genus *Zanthoxylum*. They come in several varieties with different flavors and give a unique spicy bite to food. When dried chilies (introduced in the 17th century) are added to the pot, Sichuan cooking becomes extremely hot. Garlic and spices such as star anise, cassia, and ginger are often used. Hunanese cuisine is famous for its hot pots and steamed spiced chicken dishes.

Because of their relatively remote location, other provinces have had little impact on this school of cuisine. Long winters make food preservation techniques important, such as pickling, smoking, and salting. Sichuan cuisine is composed of seven basic flavors: sour, pungent, hot, sweet, bitter, aromatic, and salty. Beans, including mung and soybeans, play an important role as do bamboo shoots.

Chengdu, capital of Sichuan, is the most representative of the Western school of cuisine. In 2011, UNESCO declared it a “City of Gastronomy” because of the sophistication of its cuisine. Among the areas famous for their street food are Wadancang Street, the areas near Wenshu Monastery and Sichuan University, Jinli Road, and Shuhan Dongjie. However, the city government initiated a campaign to remove street vendors from its roads and some have disappeared, at least in the center of the city.

Three of the most popular Chengdu street foods are noodles, tofu, and foods prepared and served on skewers.

Yunnan Province is a mountainous area in southwest China bordering on Burma, Laos, and Vietnam. Around a third of the population are ethnic minorities, with the result that the cuisine is extremely varied. Unusual street-food items found here include fern fronds, tree bark, various flowers, lichens, and bugs, including bamboo larvae.

## Major Street Foods

### *Noodles/Dumplings*

By far, the most popular noodle street food, *dandan*, also called peddlers' noodles, was first introduced in the middle 1800s. Historically, the vendors carried cooked noodles and condiments in baskets hanging from a pole across their shoulders. The pole itself was called *dandan*, hence the name. Today, the noodles are either sold in stalls or carts located on street corners or neighborhood night markets.

To eat *dandan*, the freshly boiled wheat noodles are placed in a bowl covered with a thick slightly sweet sauce containing ground pork, pickled mustard greens, chili oil, then garnished with chopped scallion and topped with a quick shake of the tongue-numbing Sichuan pepper.

Chengdu boasts a dumpling with very thin wrapping called *chao shou* (crossed hands) because of the way it is formed. In typical Sichuanese fashion, a small bowl of three or four dumplings is sold by street vendors dressed with chili oil, vinegar, sesame, pungent peppercorn, ginger, and garlic.

### Mápó Dòufu

A very traditional and readily available dish found in street markets, *Mápó dòufu*, is also called “pockmarked woman’s tofu” because the white cubes of tofu become speckled with ground pork and black beans. This subtle but potent dish is made by braising squares of tofu in a mixture of ground pork, fermented black beans, chili oil, garlic, soy sauce, sugar, sesame oil, and a generous amount of ground Sichuan pepper and garnished with chopped scallions or coriander leaves.

### ***Mápó Dòufu***

The name of the dish *Mápó Dòufu* originates from a story about an unattractive spinster who was mapo: “ma” meaning pockmarked and “po” meaning old lady. She was selling the most delicious tofu

dish in the region. Since then, this unique dish has carried her name and has spread across the province. The speckled pieces of the cooked tofu also resemble the marks on the face of the old woman.



### Dòufu Nǎo

Street vendors travel the city streets on bicycles hawking this very soft silky bean curd. *Dòufu nǎo* can be translated as either bean curd brains or bean curd flower. It is typically served warm in the winter and chilled in the summer. After scooping the silken tofu from large wooden tubs into plastic or paper bowls, patrons select from a variety of savory toppings, which include preserved vegetables, chili sauce, black vinegar, soy sauce, chopped green onions, and Sichuan pepper powder or from sweet toppings such as sugar and chopped nuts.

### *Skewered Foods*

A very common sight when browsing night markets in the entire region is crowds of people surrounding a street vendor's car, picking out skewers of meat from a communal cauldron of hot red broth. Vendors also grill meat, vegetables, and even potatoes on skewers on small charcoal stoves.

### Ma La Tang

*Ma La Tang* literally means “numbness of the mouth.” Vendors prepare a highly seasoned broth with copious amounts of dried and fresh red chilies and sesame oil. Patrons then cook their skewered food in this broth, including raw squid, sausages, crabs, tofu cubes, coagulated pork blood, fish paste dumplings, chicken or pork cubes, mushrooms, and scallions. Once cooked to the desired degree of doneness, a personal touch is added by a variety of condiments: oil, soy sauce, oyster sauce, and chopped fresh garlic.

### Reganian

These hot dry noodles are a traditional dish of Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province, where they are eaten for breakfast. They are sold by street vendors in residential neighborhoods from early in the morning to late at night. *Reganian* is made by mixing cooked noodles with oil and then drying them. Before eating, the noodles are scalded in boiled water and mixed with such condiments as soy sauce, sesame paste, pickled vegetables, chopped garlic chives, and chili oil.

### Guo Qiao Mi Xian

Translated as “crossing the bridge noodles,” this is Yunnan's best-known dish. The vendor pours the rice noodles, not quite cooked, into the diner's soup, to which the customer adds his or her own selection of thin meat slices, vegetables, and spices.

### *Yunnan Lijiang Pancakes*

Pieces of dough made from unleavened wheat flour are stuffed with shredded pork and minced green onions, rolled up, brushed with butter, and baked in a simple firepit oven on a street corner. All it takes is a skilled wife-and-husband team, and they are cranking them out at a pace of a dozen nearly every 15 minutes.

## **Southern China**

The South centers on the province of Guangdong and its major city Guangzhou (Canton). Chinese consider this region to have the greatest of all culinary traditions. The South is subtropical, giving three crops per year. As a result, there are a wide variety of ingredients used by Cantonese cooks. Many kinds of vegetables and fruits, fish of every variety, both fresh and dried (dried squid and jellyfish are specialties), and meats such as poultry and pork are made into a profusion of dishes. Cantonese prefer fresh flavors under the theory that a food should taste like the thing itself. If a fish is consumed, then it must be a lightly cooked fresh fish perhaps seasoned only with the typical Cantonese black beans, light soy sauce, slivered green onions, and cilantro. The same theory holds for street food, including the many delicately flavored and textured dumplings.

In Guangdong as well as Hong Kong and Fukien, the expression “dim sum” (“dot heart”) is used in a way that corresponds to *xiao chi*. However, this term is not to be confused with the Hong Kong institution of dim sum, which is quite well known in the West. This latter is the type of restaurant that specializes exclusively in a compendium of items associated with *xiao chi* and with street food: *bao zi* (filled buns) of all sorts, congees topped with salted fish or different cuts of offal and meat, dumplings (*jiao zi*) of different shapes and forms, and even such European-influenced items as the beloved egg custard tartlets. Restaurant dim sum is a semi-regular almost ritualistic occasions (mornings, and in particular Sunday mornings or as afternoon tea) among family and friends.

Many of the street foods in Guangdong are the same as those in Hong Kong.

*Note: The following names are Cantonese, not Mandarin.*

### **Major Street Foods**

#### Lo Mai Gai

Glutinous rice is filled with such savory ingredients as chicken, black mushrooms, Chinese sausages, green onions, bamboo shoots, and sometimes dried shrimp or scallops, wrapped in a lotus leaf and steamed. The leaf is not tied but rolled up and stacked with other packets in a steamer.

## The Issue of Language

The Chinese language is actually 17 or 18 languages, depending on how they are classified. Some are mutually intelligible, but many are not. The official language is called Pinyin or Mandarin in the old style because it comes from north China and was spoken in the old royal court in Beijing. Mandarin speakers do not understand Cantonese, spoken in

Guangdong. Fortunately, all Chinese languages are written in the same symbols so that when Mandarin speakers go to a Cantonese restaurant, they know what's on the menu—they just cannot say the dish in Cantonese. In the United States, where most Chinese restaurants are Cantonese, Mandarin speakers have to use English.

### Cheong Fun

A mainstay of dim sum as well as the street, large thin noodles are rolled around a filling of bits of meat or shrimp, folded into rolls and steamed. A sweet soy or savory sauce is poured over the dish; it is just cut and served. Another variety (*zaa loeng*) has a crispy vegetarian filling made out of fried dough.

### Siu Mai

Sometimes translated as “pork and mushroom dumplings,” these translucent, cup-shaped dumplings have a wrapper made of arrowroot and tapioca starch that is filled usually with ground pork, small shrimp, black mushrooms, green onions, and ginger seasoned with rice wine, soy sauce, sesame oil, and chicken sauce. Other ingredients can include bamboo shoots and water chestnuts.

### Tingzai Porridge or Congee

This famous rice porridge is cooked with pork, fried peanuts, squid, fish, and ginger. *Tingzai* means small boat, and it is sometimes called “sampan porridge.” In the old days, poor fishermen would row up to people walking along the bay and offer them a bowl of congee filled with fresh shrimps and fish. Today it is sold to passengers on boats and even served in upscale restaurants.

### Fried River Snails

One of the favorite snacks of Cantonese, these freshly caught snails are associated with the mid-autumn festival. They have thin shells and thick meat and are fried with perilla leaves, which accentuate their delicate flavor.

### Siu Laap (*Meat Dishes*)

*Siu laap* is a category of Cantonese cuisine that includes all meat dishes. It is divided into *siu mei*, barbecue, and *lou mei* (*Mandarin lu wei*), often translated as deli. Depending on the item, it may be cooked on- or off-site. If it is an entire pig, it is roasted in a vertical oven at a location close to the market. Smaller items like ducks, pork butts, and chickens may also be roasted in these ovens. Charcoal grills in the market may be used to crisp up the meat for the patron.

### Siu Mei

This is the generic name in Cantonese for meats roasted on spits over an open fire or in an oven. The meat is coated with a sauce (a different sauce for each kind of meat) before roasting. Popular ingredients include pork, duck, beef, and chicken. Goat and lamb are rarely used in Cantonese cuisine.

*Lou mei* dishes are simmered in a soy-based sauce (*lou*) that are flavored with aromatic spices, including star anise and dried orange peel. It can be made from meat or fish, internal organs, and entrails. It is served hot or cold. Cold *lou mei* is often served with a side dish of hot *lou* sauce.

*Char sui* is pork seasoned with honey, five-spice powder, soy sauce, and hoisin sauce and roasted in an oven. *Siu laap* is roasted goose, while *siu laap* is roasted duck. For all these meats, the exterior should be crispy and sweet, and the interior soft and juicy.

### Char Sui Bao

A puffy white leavened dough with a yeasty aroma is filled with barbecued pork seasoned with soy sauce, shallots, oyster sauce, and sesame oil and steamed or baked. The bun is wrapped in such a way that the dough splays open to make several petals.

*Mak yue* are boiled or roasted cuttlefish or squid that are colored orange.

### Hao jian (*Oyster Omelet*)

Originating in Fujian province, one of the most popular street dishes is oyster omelet made on-site by vendors. An egg batter is thickened with starch, filled with small oysters (or sometimes shrimp), and fried in lard. Sometimes a hot and sour sauce is added. Variations can be found in Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines.

## Northern China

Despite low rainfalls and cold, dry winters, Northern China has a grand food tradition, especially in its noodles, dumplings, baked cakes, and filling soups and

stews. Northern cuisine is characterized by boiling, stewing, and braising of meats and vegetables. Mutton and beef are far more common than the south. Steamed buns made from wheat flour are one of the most popular street foods, heartier than southern varieties. Northern food is considered to be oilier than other regions with strong flavorings based on garlic, green onions, soy sauces, and vinegars. Noodles of all sorts are made in markets as street food, usually served in clear soups with these kinds of flavorings.

In Beijing, entire neighborhoods and streets are devoted to the sale of street foods. The best known are Jiumen, where more than 200 varieties are sold; Wangjiejie (Donghuamen) night market, where you can find such exotic items as deep-fried insects and scorpions and snake; Guijie (Ghost Street), specializing in hot and spicy shrimps; Niujie Muslim Snack Street, selling Muslim meat dishes; and Fucheng Street, where upscale restaurants serve dishes from all over China. Typically, these areas do not have tables or chairs; the food is eaten on the go.

### ***Major Street Food***

#### Baozi

These steamed filled buns are found throughout China but are especially popular in the north as a breakfast dish. They are usually filled with pork, but sometimes vegetables are used. They are accompanied by vinegar or soy sauce and chili paste.

#### Rou Jia Mo

China's answer to the hamburger is this street food that originated in Shaanxi Province in northwest China and is now popular throughout China. Its origins are said to go back to the third century BCE. Meat, usually pork but in some regions beef and lamb, is stewed for hours in a broth made from 20 spices and seasonings. The meat is shredded, then mixed with coriander and mild peppers, and stuffed in *Mo*, a type of flatbread or sometimes a steamed bun.

#### Liangpi

This noodle-like dish also originated in Shaanxi but has become popular throughout Northern and Central China. The word means "cold skin." The *skin* refers to the dough that is made from rice or sometimes wheat flour that is mixed with water and washed until only the gluten remains. The dough is formed into a large pancake and steamed for a couple of minutes. It is then cut into strips and put in a bowl with julienned cucumber and bean sprouts. The dish is then covered with a hot-salty-sour

source, each vendor having his own recipe. They typically include vinegar, chili oil, garlic, and salt. One famous variety of sauce is Majiang, which includes black sesame paste. The diner can also add vinegar, salt, and chili peppers to his or her taste.

### Jianbing

This thin crispy breakfast crepe originated in Beijing but is now sold all over China. A thin batter made from millet flour is poured in a circle on a hot plate, spread with eggs, sprinkled with parsley, and lightly fried until it is crispy. It is removed from the fire, coated with red sauces made from tofu bean curd and chili sauce, and then folded over a piece of crispy dough and lettuce. Some vendors have motorized cooking plates that turns to speed the cooking process.

### Shaobing

Another popular breakfast dish, this baked, layered round bread sprinkled with sesame seeds can be either filled or unfilled. Fillings can be savory, such as red bean paste, black sesame paste, or stir fried mung beans with egg and tofu, or sweet. There are many local varieties. Traditionally, *shaobing* are served with warmed soy milk or, in the winter, with hot pot. Unfilled *shaobing* are eaten with steamed eggs.

## Eastern and Southeastern China

The East is usually considered to mean the delta of the Yangtze River, including such cities as Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Shaoxing. It has been called “the land of rice and fish” because of the numerous rice paddies and lakes located along the valley and its flood plains. Fish of all kinds, rice, and vegetables are the base of Eastern cuisine. Foods are more delicately flavored here, often slowly cooked in soy sauce and sugar-laced broths. Shaoxing is so famous for its rice wine that the city’s name is given to the product. Numerous rice vinegars are also a feature of the region. Street food bears the same characteristics; buns, for instance, are lighter with sweet-flavored fillings. Fried batter-dipped foods are also lightly done and usually accompanied by a light sweet–sour sauce. The region includes the province–municipality of Shanghai (the largest city in the world), Zhejiang, and Anhui.

### *Major Street Food*

#### Xiaolongbao (*Soup Dumplings*)

The most famous of all Shanghai street foods, these steamed buns are also called soup dumplings because a cube of meat aspic is inserted before the skin is pleated

and burst into one's mouth when the dumpling is bitten into. They are made with partially leavened flour, which makes their skin tender and translucent. The heat melts the aspic into soup.

### Shengjianbao

A famous Shanghai specialty, also called *Shengjian mantou*, is a small pan-fried *bao zi* usually filled with pork that has a firm bottom and a soft top. Chopped green onions and sesame are sprinkled on the buns during cooking. *Shengjian bao* is usually eaten at breakfast and purchased from corner stalls that sell pork buns and other snacks.

### Zongzi

These rectangular or cylindrical packets of glutinous rice are filled with various meat and vegetable stuffings, then wrapped in bamboo leaves, and steamed or boiled. They are traditionally eaten during the Dragon Boat Festival in the late spring. Variations are found throughout China as well as Southeast Asia and the Philippines. Other leaves used for the wrapping may include corn, banana, shell ginger, and pandan leaves. The filling also varies and can include azumi bean paste, salted duck egg, pork belly, taro, shredded pork or chicken, Chinese sausages, and mushrooms.

### *Beggar's Chicken*

A famous and very old dish, Beggar's Chicken originated in the city of Hangzhou, the capital of the coastal province of Zhejiang. A whole chicken is stuffed with mushrooms, sometimes pork, and seasonings, wrapped in lotus leaves, covered in clay, and baked at low heat for hours. Today it is usually prepared in an oven, though originally it was cooked in the ground. Legend has it that it was invented by a Hangzhou beggar who stole a chicken, but because he had no stove, wrapped in clay and baked it in a hole in the ground.

### Xie Ke Huang (*Yellow Crab Shell*)

Named for an entirely different food, *xie ke huang* is a pastry and one of the iconic snack and street foods of Shanghai. The filling can be either sweet—sweet bean paste or date paste and roses—or savory—shallot oil, pork, and crab meat. The pastries are round, slightly flattened, yellow in color, and sprinkled with sesame seed. Its name comes from its resemblance to a crab.

### The Origins of Stinky Tofu

The inventor of stinky tofu was Wang Zhihe, who came to Beijing in 1669 to take the examination to enter the civil service. After he failed, he stayed in the city to make a living by selling tofu. To preserve the tofu that hadn't been sold, he cut the leftovers into small cubes, put them into an earthen jar . . . and forgot about them. When he opened the jar several months later, the tofu pieces smelled terrible but tasted great. So he

started selling it, and the business was a great success. He opened a store, Wangzhihe, which became the Beijing Ershang Wangzhihe Food Company. The company has opened a museum dedicated to tofu, which includes a model of the original store and tofu-making equipment.

"Curd Show: Wangzhihe Opens Tofu Museum," *Global Times* | December 28, 2010.

### Stinky Tofu (*Chou Doufu*)

This fermented tofu has a very strong odor but a taste that aficionados consider delicious. It is sold at night markets and roadside stands or as a side dish in lunch bars, but rarely in restaurants. It is an iconic street food of the province of Hubei, although versions are sold all over China and Taiwan, where it is roasted on skewers. A traditional method of preparation is to make a brine from fermented milk, vegetable, meat, and spices in which the tofu ferments for up to three months. It can be eaten cold, steamed, stewed, or fried and is often accompanied by a sauce, which may be sweet or spicy hot.

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## Cuba

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*The Republic of Cuba* is an island nation in the Caribbean 90 miles off the coast of Florida. It is the largest island in the Caribbean both in size and in population



(more than 11 million). In 1492, Christopher Columbus landed here and claimed the island for Spain. Cuba remained a Spanish possession until 1898, followed by four years as a territory of the United States. In 1959, Fidel Castro overthrew the previous regime, and in 1965, Cuba became a single-party Communist state.

The island was originally inhabited by the Taino (also known as Arawak), who were enslaved by the Spanish and virtually wiped out by hardship and disease. Starting in the late 18th century, slaves, mainly from West Africa, were brought in to work on the plantations and in the mines. After slavery was abolished in 1886, Chinese were brought as indentured laborers.

Before the revolution, Cuban cuisine was based on Spanish cooking, with elements of African, French, and Chinese cuisine. Haute-cuisine and peasant fare were often blurred. Ingredients included such indigenous American crops as tomatoes, corn, yucca, calabaza (a kind of squash), green chilies, and sweet potatoes, and products from other parts of the Spanish empire, such as mango, sugarcane, rice, beans, coffee, coconut, plantain, and citrus fruits. Traditional food was seasoned, but not spicy.

Havana streets have always been alive with street-food vendors. Early drawings and lithographs as early as the 17th century show *panaderos* (bakers) wandering through the crowds in Old Havana's most beautiful square, Plaza Vieja, carrying their wares on their heads in enormous turban-like baskets. Their street cries could be heard at all times of the day.

One of the most iconic was the peanut vendors (*maniseros*) who hawked their roasted salted peanuts in a paper cone through the streets of Old Havana. Female vendors who sold fritters in the streets were called *lucumisas* (Yoruba women) because of their supposed origin in West Africa. In the 19th and early 20th century, vendors were called *las bolleras*, since they served *bollos* (buns), tortillas, sausages, and *butifarras* (ham sandwiches) from their stands that had a little burner and a table. Everywhere there were walking vendors calling out their hot tortillas, which passersby would rush to buy.

For the first eight years of the Revolution, street food and ambulatory vendors remained part of the Havana streetscape, but in 1968, street vendors were put into the category of “counterrevolutionary” remnants of the private sector. They were referred to as “lazy persons in perfect physical condition who set up some kind of vending stand, any kind of small business, in order to make fifty pesos a day.” The government took total control over food production, and street-food vendors in Cuba largely vanished for 30 years. An exception was state-run stands selling ice cream and snacks at amusement parks. The crackdown especially hurt Havana's Chinese community, who had entered the street-food vending market with delicious *bao* (“steamed buns”) stuffed with sweet pork.

The state monopoly on food distribution ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989–1990, which led to the collapse of Soviet economic aid and the

massive food imports from Russia and Eastern Europe. In 1994, the government introduced measures to make the economy more flexible, including the creation of farmers' markets, and the conditional permitting of private restaurants, called *paladores*, often located in people's homes. (One paladar, *La Guarida* ("the den") in Central Havana, was the site of the shooting of some scenes from the award-winning movie *Fresa y Chocolate*.)

In April 2011, President Raul Castro announced a substantial "updating of the model" of the historic socialist economic arrangements permitted under the Cuban Revolution. In terms of street food, it allowed the formation of a category of worker that had not existed in Cuba since 1968: the self-employed worker (*cuentapropista*). Street-food vending is one of the more than 150 trades allowed under the new policy. Once the vendors buy a license and pay taxes on their profits, they can advertise and sell food on the streets. This is done either from stationary kiosks on house porches open to the street (*cafeterias*) or, less frequently, from ambulatory carts. They can employ workers (beyond immediate family members) and set their own prices. The proprietors come from all backgrounds, but many are professionals who have left their secure but unremunerative salaried positions.

Today, street-food vendors can be found throughout Havana, although most of them are on the main avenues near bus stops, schools, hospitals, around train and bus stations, and at concerts or sporting events. They sell their wares from stands, windows, wheelbarrows, and baskets. Once again, the peanut vendors in Plaza Vieja are announcing their wares with their full-throated cries, and thanks to its street food, Havana is coming back to life again!

The stationary *cafeterias* range from tiny mom-and-pop-run stands offering take-away coffee and cookies in the owners' front yard to sophisticated operations with nonfamily employees and space for clients to sit down to a meal. They may be run out of purpose-built or renovated front yards or street-level porches of private homes. The one common characteristic of all *cafeterias* is that they advertise their wares via a menu-board, whether home-made and hand-lettered or professionally designed, and all food items are denominated, as a rule, in Cuban pesos.

The country operates with a dual-currency system: Cuban convertible pesos (called CUCs, commonly pronounced "kooks") are the default currency for tourists, and Cuban pesos are the default currency for Cubans, although there is nothing preventing either group from possessing both currencies. The main consumers of food eaten standing are local residents.

## Major Street Foods

### Sandwiches

Bread with . . . (*pan con*) almost anything is the most popular food sold at kiosks: A fried egg in a soft bun (*pan con tortilla*) is emblematic of this category. Other

options are *pan con bistek* (pork cutlet), *pan con chorizo* (pork sausage), and *pan con lechon* (suckling pig). In this last, a sprinkling of *chicharrones* (pork cracklings) can be added. A very popular dish is Cuban pizza—a thick piece of dough with a thin layer of seasoned tomato sauce and cheese.

## Fried Foods

All manner of fried foods are sold on the street. The main ones are

- *papas rellenas*, balls of mashed potatoes filled with ground pork and deep-fried.
- *croquetas*, small roll coated with bread crumbs and filled with ground pork.
- Cuban *tamal*, which unlike the Mexican *tamal* is a cylinder of pork-flecked rice seasoned with ground corn, garlic, onion, tomato, and cumin, wrapped in corn husks, then steamed.
- *churros*, deep-fried dough cut into finger-size strips.
- *chicharitas de planate*, thin slices of plantain fried in oil.
- *frituras de malanga*, grated taro mixed with egg and crushed garlic.
- *tostones*, fried pieces of plantain with a soft interior and crispy outside.

## Beverages

Any of these street delicacies may be accompanied by a cup of Cuban coffee, typically black espresso, which is sipped by most Cubans with industrial quantities of

### The Peanut Vendor

Perhaps the most famous song in the world about a street-food vendor is Moises Santos's *Manisero* ("The Peanut Vendor"), recorded first in 1928 by the Cuban singer Rita Montaner. It was later rerecorded by a Havana-themed orchestra in New York, which turned the infectious song into a sensation that in turn led to the 1930s' North American craze for the *rumba*. The song conjures up an image of an ambulatory peanut

vendor hawking his wares through the streets of Old Havana; his cry is heard by a shut-in lady who comes out onto her second-floor balcony to order a cone of his peanuts. She probably would lower her payment (a 1-peso coin today) in a bag attached to a rope, and the cone will be pulled up in the bag, another eternal Cuban practice connecting the worlds of street and home, even today.

sugar. An alternative is a glass of natural fruit juice in season or a delicious *baitido* (milk shake) made with mango, guava, pineapple, *mamey* (mamey fruit), or *guanabana* (sapote). Sometimes you find a stand, perhaps run by an *oriental* (a person from Eastern Cuba) offering *pru* (a specialty drink of Santiago de Cuba made with fermented plant, cinnamon, and sugar) or *guarapo*, fermented sugarcane juice.

## Sweet Dishes

Sugar was for centuries the basis of the Cuban economy, and sweet dishes are very popular in Cuba.

- Guava pastries, small tarts with guava or coconut filling.
- *Turron de mani*, a hard candy made with roasted peanuts mixed with honey and caramel.
- *Turon e ajonjoi*, sesame seed nougat.
- *Boniatillo*, mashed sweet potato cooked in syrup and sprinkled with powdered sugar.
- *Tartaletas*, little tarts filled with grated coconuts in syrup.
- Cuban ice cream may be served in cones, cups, or between two cake slices. Another version is the *duro frio*, ices and glaces made of fruit juices, sugar, and water.

## Cajitas

*Cajitas* (“little boxes”) are small boxes of the size of a thick wallet that contain the equivalent of a meal featuring a classic *comida criolla* (“Creole cuisine”), consisting of rice—plain white rice (*arroz blanco*) and black beans (*frijoles negros*) or *conгри* (rice with bacon fat, oregano, and cumin, mixed with black beans)—a *vianda* (a root vegetable such as cassava, potato, sweet potato, plantain, or taro); a green salad (lettuce, cabbage, sliced cucumber, and/or tomato), and a portion of meat, usually a pork chop or fried or roast chicken, less often fish.

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## Czech Republic and Slovakia

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From 1918 until 1993, the Czech Republic and Slovakia were one country known as Czechoslovakia. Both had been part of Europe's greatest multiethnic state, the Austro-Hungarian or Hapsburg Empire, which was broken up into several smaller countries after the end of World War I. Czechs and Slovaks have much in common, including languages (Slavic) that are similar, a shared history, and many foods that are popular in both countries. But they also regard themselves as separate ethnic groups and, in 1993, peacefully separated into two independent states.

Both are landlocked nations located in Central Europe that share similar climates but different landscapes. Much of the Czech lands are rolling hills, and the valleys of major European rivers run through them: the Moldau, Elbe, and headwaters of the Oder. There has always been good farmland, although agriculture is not the major industry. Slovakia is more mountainous, especially in the south, and has large areas that are forested, but agriculture is very important here as well. Both countries produce wheat and barley, potatoes, food animals (especially pigs), and sugar beets, all of which are the basis of Czech and Slovak cuisine. Fish, poultry, wild mushrooms, and game are also popular. Grapes for winemaking are grown in the southern regions of both countries.

The Czech Republic encompasses two ancient regions of Europe, Bohemia (in the west) and Moravia (in the southeast), as well as part of Silesia in the northeast. Slovaks and Czechs migrated to their respective regions in Europe beginning in the fifth century CE and, over the next millennium and a half, interacted with neighboring Germans, Austrians, Poles, and Hungarians, so it is not surprising that many of the foods of these countries appear in the Czech and Slovak states, too. The Czech capital, Prague, was a major cultural center in the Hapsburg Empire, and the influence of Viennese cuisine can still be seen (and tasted) there. Sausages and schnitzels, sweet pastries and other flour-based foods (such as pancakes and dumplings), cream sauces and whipped cream, all are glories of traditional Czech cooking.

Beer is also deeply rooted in the foodways of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Czech beers are world famous, the city of Plzeň lending its name to a style of beer made the world over, Pilsner. The city of České Budějovice also gave its name to a renowned name in beer, Budvar, known as Budweiser in German and English. These beers are made with hops grown in both countries, which are considered some of the best quality in the world. Beer is a necessity at all public festivals and other events where food is enjoyed. Czechs are the world's biggest consumers of beer, downing 132 liters per person annually.

Czech wine is produced primarily in the southern part of Moravia, where the vast majority of vineyards are located. Slovak wine comes from the southern and southwestern parts of the country. Good-quality white wines are produced in both countries, as well as some reds and special types, such as sparkling wines and

Tokajs. Czech and Slovak wines are popular in Central Europe but less well known outside that area.

## Major Street Foods

Like other developed European countries, the Czech and Slovak republics have a full complement of international fast-food chains. Wenceslas Square, in the center of Prague, is filled with them. But more traditional street foods are also available, and true to local food culture, many are fatty, whether sausages, cheeses, or sweets.

### Sausages (*Klobásy*)

Called *klobásy* in general, sausages come in many types that have their own specific names. Street stands on Wenceslas Square display sausages hanging from hooks, ready for cooking on griddles or open grills. Sausage styles include several German types, spicy-red Prague sausages, and Polish, Hungarian, and Moravian sausages, served in different ways. One, called *parek v rohlíky* (usually translated as “hot dog in a bun”), is a long thin sausage inserted into in a hollowed-out bun with mustard. Other sausages are thick, well-grilled, and oozing fat, served on plates with thick slices of chewy bread and garnished with mustard, onions, and other toppings. Sausages sold on the streets of Slovak cities such as Bratislava, the capital, are similar to those served in the Czech Republic. All are eaten with the fingers, not with a fork, even if the sausages are hot to the touch.

### Smažený Sýr

One of the most popular street foods is fried cheese, *smažený sýr* or *smažák* (in Czech) and *vyprážený sýr* (in Slovak). A thick slice of cheese is dredged in flour, beaten egg, and breadcrumbs and then deep-fried. The cheese might be a semisoft cheese like Edam or Muenster, or a native Czech cheese called Hermelín, a soft cheese similar to French Brie or Camembert, which is runnier than the other cheeses when fried. *Smažený sýr* can be eaten with the fingers, the cheese first dipped in mayonnaise or tartar sauce, or it can be placed in a bun and served with fried potatoes and salad.

### Langoš

A Hungarian import now popular in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia, *langoš*, is a leavened wheat bread formed into flat rounds and deep-fried, then garnished with a variety of toppings. Savory *langoš* are rubbed with garlic or covered with a choice of chopped garlic, sliced sausages or ham, sauerkraut, sour cream, grated yellow cheese, or soft fresh white cheese. Sweet versions are topped with fruit preserves or sprinkled with cinnamon and sugar.

## ***Trdelník***

*Trdelník* is very popular in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. *Skalický trdelník* (*trdelník* from the city of Skalica) is a name protected by the European Union as unique to that place. *Trdelník* is made from a sweet dough of eggs, flour, and sugar that is rolled by hand into long ropes, then tightly wrapped around thick wooden or metal rods and baked by slowly rotating the rods next to an open heat source. The final result is a crispy, hollow, barrel-shaped pastry that is dredged in a mixture of sugar, cinnamon, and chopped nuts before serving. Eaten by hand, this treat is sold from street stands year-round.

## **Other Street Foods**

### **Potato Pancakes**

Known as *bramboráky*, these are pancakes made from grated potatoes mixed with a small amount of flour and beaten egg, then panfried or baked on a griddle. Sometimes grated onions or sauerkraut are added to the batter. Popular garnishes include applesauce or sour cream.

### ***Palačinky***

*Palačinky* are very thin crepes (pancakes) made from egg batter cooked on a griddle, then rolled around a filling. Savory *palačinky* are filled with meat or cheese, whereas sweet ones are filled with fruit preserves, sweetened fresh white cheese, or nuts (including chestnut puree), and sprinkled with sugar. *Palačinky* stands are often found around marketplaces and at festivals.

### **Carnival and Easter Treats**

Street stands during Carnival (before Lent) sell deep-fried pastries rolled in sugar, pretzels sprinkled with salt, and caraway seeds or poppy seeds and sugar. Food stands at Easter markets feature yeast-raised buns made of braided dough often formed into the shape of rabbits, lambs, or birds, with a whole, red-dyed egg baked into them as part of the decoration.

### **Christmas Market Foods**

In addition to many of the street foods described earlier, food stands at Christmas markets also sell gingerbread cookies (*perníčky*), cut into holiday shapes and often intricately decorated with white icing. (Many people buy them to take home and hang on their Christmas trees.) The favorite drink for keeping warm in the winter

weather is *svařené víno*, hot mulled wine made of red wine, sugar, orange and lemon peel, cinnamon, and cloves. This drink is so popular that some street stands now sell it year-round.

### “Election Goulash”

During the period between the two world wars, Czechoslovak political parties often set up free goulash stands near polling places on Election Day to influence the voters’ choices. This culinary tradition was revived in 1990, shortly after the fall of the communist government, when the first free elections in 41 years were held in Prague. Political parties set up “goulash cannons” (big, black-iron, portable field kitchens often used by the military in the field) and dished out free bowls of steaming hot *guláš* to people lined up to vote. *Guláš* is still a popular dish sold at some street stands and at festivals.

### Drinks

Beer (*pivo*) is the perennial favorite, and canned soft drinks are ubiquitous, as is hot spiced wine. But in autumn (especially in winemaking areas), street stands also serve “new wine” (*burčák* in Czech, *burčiak* in Slovak), grape juice that is still in the process of fermenting into wine. This cloudy, somewhat sweet liquid, which is lower in alcohol than real wine, combines the taste of yeast and freshly crushed grapes with the sparkle of champagne and the foam of beer. In Slovakia, it is often accompanied by *pagáče*, small, round, savory scones much like American biscuits.

### Open-Face Sandwiches

*Obložené chlebičky* (garnished breads) are not only popular appetizers for a meal, but also sold as snacks at some street stands, especially during festivals. Thick slices of chewy white bread are spread with butter and topped with sliced ham, sausage, hard-boiled egg, cheese, tomato, fresh or pickled cucumber, or a variety of meat, cheese, or vegetable spreads.

### Chestnuts

As in other European countries, roasted chestnuts (*kaštany*, *gaštany*) are eaten as soon as the fresh nuts become available in the autumn. Slovakia has particularly good chestnuts from its mountainous regions, and vendors set up roasting tubs over open flames in cities and towns throughout the country. Customers eat the



hot chestnuts from paper cones, often with *pivo* (beer) or hot spiced wine as an accompaniment.

## Corn

Roasted ears of corn (*kukurica*) are also a popular street food, more common in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic. These are roasted in their husks, and then peeled and eaten with salt, butter, and often mayonnaise or a type of tartar sauce.

*Bruce Kraig*

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# D

## Denmark

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Denmark is a small country located on a peninsula bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Baltic Sea. As a result, most of the year, it is cold, wet, or windy. Most people live near their workplace, and with short commute times, breakfast usually is eaten at home. Lunch is normally a cold meal, often a homemade lunch pack with open sandwiches or a meal in the canteen at work or at school. The famous Danish *smørrebrød*, an open-faced sandwich, is eaten at lunch in restaurants or brought home and eaten with a knife and fork. Cakes and Danish pastries are bought at the baker's and brought home for coffee or eaten at a café where it is warmer than outside. For most people, supper is the hot meal of the day.

Until a few decades ago, eating out was only for special occasions. In the last 30 years, increasing wealth has opened up new possibilities for eating out, especially in the cities. Street food is not very widespread, and most of it is international food sold via fast-food chains. Street food is limited to snacks and intermediate meals like hot dogs, an apple, candy, chocolate bars, ice cream, and cold drinks.

### Regulation

Food vendors are required by law to have a documented self-control system to ensure food safety. The basis of this system is a good work flow. A good work flow ensures adequate cleaning, well-maintained buildings, protection against vermin, good personal hygiene routines for employees, and temperature control of storing, heating, and cooling. All non-skilled employees working with the production of a limited range of products must complete a basic course in hygiene, which can be taken online.

The Danish smiley system is made for the sake of the consumers, so they can see how the vendor's food safety is rated: the more happy smileys, the better. Retailers that sell food and beverages to consumers are awarded an *elite smiley* when they have received at least four consecutive very happy smileys and have had no remarks for the last 12 months. Otherwise there are four other smileys ranging from a happy smiley, meaning "nothing to report" to an unhappy smiley meaning "penalty consisting of a fine, police report, or authorization or registration taken away." All food vendors pay 25 percent value added tax, and their employees pay approximately 45 percent of their income in taxes.



A Danish aebleskiver dessert with applesauce and small pancakes. (Simone Van Den Berg/Dreamstime.com)

## Major Street Foods

### The Wiener Cart

An exception to the relative absence of street food is the wiener cart, or *pølsevogn*, which has become a symbol of Danishness. It offers a cheap, fast meal, and people from all layers of society occasionally buy a meal here. The carts roll out mostly during the daytime and sometimes at night, especially during weekends outside train and bus stations and other busy places.

The wiener cart came to Denmark from Germany in 1921, when six mobile carts were set up in Copenhagen, and in the beginning, only wieners and buns were sold. Wiener carts quickly spread to smaller towns, where they became places of rendezvous for young people. A

wiener cart is mobile and completely self-sufficient. It does not need mains and water supplies, and has gas and batteries that run 24 hours on a single charge. It is motorized and can be packed up in 15 minutes. Vendors in Copenhagen and in some other municipalities are given priority in getting licenses if they have disabilities. In the second largest city, Aarhus, most wiener carts are run by the Children's Office, a charity for troubled children. This rule is fading, however, as hot dogs have become ever more popular—something like 4,500 carts in the country, many owned by the Steff Houlberg/Tulip corporation.

The first wiener carts sold a pork-based red-colored wiener, served with mustard and wrapped in greaseproof paper for 25 øre (about 5 U.S. cents). Those who wanted bread with it bought a 5-øre roll. Because the red coloring agent can cause allergies, it was banned in Denmark in 1981. Since the red color is important to Danes, today's hot dog sausages are allowed to be colored because they are dyed with nonallergenic cochineal. The types of sausages offered on carts have expanded greatly over the years. Sausages with a roll typically consist of roast sausages, red sausages, larger frankfurters, sausages wrapped in bacon, Danish pork sausage, and spicy sausages with garlic and chili. They are served with tomato ketchup, sweet and strong mustard, and raw or fried onions.

## Street Food Slang

In Denmark, slang has been widely used in ordering the items sold in wiener carts, although it is going out of fashion. Many of the terms are not exactly polite language!

- Sausages: severed fingers, guts
- Red sausages: pixie arms
- Sausage rolls: side cars
- Sausage with roll: dead man with dough
- Roll with mustard and ketchup: scratcher, poor man's hot dog
- Hot dog: Indian with side car, dead Indian in canoe
- Hot dog with all the trimmings: dead Indian in blanket and war paint
- Hot dog with mustard and ketchup: dead Indian with blood, poop, and puke.

Because of the immigration from Muslim countries, the halal sausage was introduced in 2002 to adhere to Islamic food rules. It is sold with the same kind of accompaniments as the ordinary Danish sausage. Some frankfurter carts are organic and a few sell vegan sausages.

## Hot Dogs and French Hot Dogs

Hot dogs are considered to be one of several sausage types, unlike in the United States. Typically, it is a pork and beef frankfurter placed inside a roll of bread. It was introduced with the first Danish wiener cart in 1921. Back then, the sausage was put inside a day-old roll that was kept warm by the same heated containers used for sausages. In 1951, master baker Jul. Paaskesen began baking oblong hot dog rolls for Copenhagen vendors, and the hot dog got its present look. Traditionally, a hot dog is a half-sectioned roll, a frankfurter, raw or fried onions, ketchup, mustard and sometimes rémoulade (a cold, yellow sauce made from mayonnaise and pickles), and pickled cucumbers or cucumber salad. There are regional differences, and in the provinces, it is not uncommon to offer red cabbage instead of cucumber salad. In Denmark, people prefer the sausage to be longer than the roll, although in other countries, the roll and the sausage have the same length.

Some carts also sell sandwiches with roast pork loin, burgers or meatballs, *frikadeller*, and “hand-deller”—a handheld *frikadelle*. Such nonalcoholic beverages as cold cocoa milk are sold from the cart.

A French hot dog is a frankfurter in a hollowed-out bread, an instant success from the moment it was introduced in 1983. The sauce is a mayonnaise-based dressing or ketchup. It is sold in a paper case and is easier to carry than an ordinary hot dog.

The French hot dog is designed for women and people who do not want to be seen eating at a cart or who think ordinary hot dogs are too messy. Generally, frankfurter carts have been a man's place, but this invention made them a place for everyone.

In later years, there has been more focus on gourmet hot dogs with homemade dressings and unique combinations. For some years, chefs have competed in making the best hot dog of the year.

### **Pork Loin Sandwich**

Pork loin sandwiches are popular at Christmas markets, grill bars, select wiener carts, and festivals. They are made with thin slices of roasted pork laid on bread slices that have been spread with mayonnaise or rémoulade. Sandwiches are topped with crisp cracklings (fried pork skin), pickles, sour-sweet red cabbage, and sometimes pickles or raw apple. The quality varies greatly, depending on the bread, meat, and garnish used.

### **Handheld Bottled Beer**

In Denmark, it is socially acceptable to drink a cold beer from the bottle on squares, in parks, or on the quays of the many small harbors. It is common to see men, and some women, meeting in these public places to have a beer and a chat.

### **Ice-Cream Cones**

As a large dairy-producing country, Danes know a lot about ice-cream creations. During summer, old-fashioned ice-cream cones with scoops of ice cream are very popular. They can be elaborate, topped with *guf* (Italian meringue) or whipped cream, jam, and maybe a cream puff. Many vendors have their own cone bakeries.

### **Smoked Herring**

On the island of Bornholm, herring are traditionally smoked during summer in smoke houses along the coast and served with raw egg yolk, chives and sliced radish, rye bread, and often with a beer.

### **“Æbleskiver”—Apple Doughnuts**

*Æbleskiver* is one of the oldest festive foods in Denmark. They are baked in special frying pans with hollows and may be filled with apple, prunes, raisins, and so on. They are eaten with icing sugar and jam. Often they are industrially produced, but at many Christmas markets, they are cooked in the classical way. These days it is a seasonal food from November till January. *Æbleskiver* is often served with a warm drink, glogg, which is a variation of German *Glühwein*, hot red or white wine mixed

with spices and served with raisins and almonds, and sometimes seasoned with port wine, rum, or brandy. Nonalcoholic variations are served too.

## **Festival Food**

At the annual international music festival at Roskilde, local clubs sell a broad range of food: everything from Thai food to burgers and vegan food. The pork loin sandwich is a great hit here too.

## **Other Vendors and International Food**

Street food is sold at market squares all over the country, usually during summer on specific days and around Christmas. Most snacks are sold from gas stations, pizza bars, kebab bars, convenience stores such as 7-Eleven, and supermarkets with ready-made meals. All these places are staffed by non-skilled employees.

International food has poured into Denmark for the last 30 years, and a number of fast-food chains have become part of the street scene. The first international burger bar Burger King came to Denmark in 1977/1978, and the first shawarma bar in 1980. There are similar vendors in towns all over the country, selling burgers, sandwiches, pizza slices, falafels, durum, kebab, china boxes, and pancakes. Some street vendors sell roast chestnuts and burned almonds in the fall. During summertime, disposable or small portable barbecues are used for grilling sausages, grilled fresh corn and more appear in town parks everywhere.

*Katrine Klinken*

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# E

## East Africa

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East Africa is a widely diverse set of countries that are located south of the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Somalia) in the northeast, down the Indian Ocean coast and interior regions to South Africa. Generally the countries include, from north to south, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and Mauritius. Among these countries, there are distinct groupings. For instance, Kenya and Uganda were under British rule from the later 19th century to the middle of the 20th century and have stronger British influences than other countries. Madagascar and Mauritius are island nations that have stronger Indian influences than the others. However, in all of East Africa's nations, British, Indian, and Arabic cultures are important in food culture.

East Africa has highly varied landforms and, despite its location along the equator, different climates. There are several broadly defined geographical regions within East Africa. One of them is the Great Lakes that include Lake Victoria with its spectacular falls, Lake Albert, and Lake Tanganyika (the world's deepest). Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi border on or include one or more of these lakes. Kenya, Tanzania, and Mozambique all border on the Indian Ocean to the east, though their interior regions differ in climate and landforms from the humid low-lying coasts. Madagascar and Mauritius are tropical islands to the south and east of the continent. To the north is the Horn of Africa, much of it subject to little, sporadic, or short-seasonal rainfall. Northern Kenya is part of that region. Portions of the region running from Kenya through Uganda into Tanzania are savanna lands, home to the wild animals that are world famous tourist attractions. Large swaths of East Africa's interior encompass agriculturally fertile highlands. This is one of the regions that exports food, but generally local foods are greatly affected by the lands and waters from which they come.

East Africa's dominant physical feature is the Great Rift Valley. Formed by movements of continental plates, the valley runs 4,000 miles from Ethiopia down to Mozambique. Within it are the Great Lakes and thrown up by its formation are such mountains as Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. Climates in the higher areas are temperate, but hot in the valley because of its equatorial location. Unlike the interior, East Africa's coastline is a mainly flat narrow strip of land backed by lands rising to the plateaus that compose most of the countries in the region. Though there are



few major ports in East Africa, fishing is an important part of the economy, and fish from both seas and lakes is important part of peoples' diets. The coastal climate is legendarily hot and humid.

The peoples of East Africa possess varied physical characteristics, languages, ethnic groups, and national affiliations. The earliest peoples were hunter-gatherers, followed by herders who came in several waves from Sudan and other areas to the north. They are called Nilotic because of the language groups to which they belong and certain physical characteristics (the famous long-distance runners of Kenya and Ethiopia are Nilotic). Some peoples, like the Maasai, remain pastoralists, but most have settled into farms, towns, and cities. The largest numbers of people speak Bantu languages of which there are many. They migrated from West Africa over the last two millennia bringing their agricultural economy with them. Nilotic peoples lived on cattle and sheep, and Bantus brought yams, groundnuts, grains, probably bananas, and domesticated goats among other food sources. These provided some of the basics of today's East African cuisines.

Arab merchants had sailed down the Red Sea and along the African coasts to trade in gold, spices, and slaves for a thousand years before the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama arrived at the end of the 15th century. The Portuguese wanted to control the spice trade centered on the spice island of Zanzibar, now part of Tanzania. That event set off a series of conflicts that led to European control of East Africa. One consequence was the most widely used language in the region, Swahili, became the lingua franca of East Africa. Based on Bantu languages mixed with Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Farsi, and others, Swahili or Kiswahili is used officially in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. It is commonly spoken in other countries, as well. Another consequence of Arab and European contact and conquest was the introduction of new foods to East Africa. Rice, corn, cassava, potatoes, chilies, pigs, and spices are a few of the major foods that are now part of the East African diet. Indians who came during British rule have been an especially important influence on food partly because they dominated commerce, such as owning and running a large percentage of food stores. The largest supermarket chain in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda called Nakumatt is run by Indo-Kenyans.

When colonial rule ended later in the 20th century, East Africa was divided into individual countries. All are different from one another in languages and customs. For instance, Malawi has one official language, Chichewa, but people there belonging to different tribal groups speak another six as their first tongues. In Mozambique, Portuguese is the official language, but at least half a dozen African languages are spoken. Most people in East Africa follow Christian religions and customs, but there is a sizable Muslim minority and many adherents of indigenous religious practices. Poverty is endemic among countries in this part of Africa. Malawi, Rwanda, Burundi, and Zimbabwe are among the poorest on Earth with

low life expectancies. At less than a dollar a day for food, majority of people in the poorest countries rarely eat meat or even get enough nutrition to keep them healthy. In such situations, street food is not a luxury but a necessity that might be the main, or only, meal for half the population.

## Main Foodstuffs

The most common kind of food sold on the streets of East Africa is starch. This calorie-laden kind of food is provided by starchy vegetables, legumes, fruits, and grains. Plantains, cassava (manioc), potatoes, beans, corn, and other grains are usually boiled into mushes or stews and served plain with some form of bread, especially Indian chapatis. When meats are affordable, goat and chicken are the most commonly eaten, sometimes in stews but also grilled. On the coasts and lakes, fish are very common, often grilled and made with spicy sauces. Some of the East African food traditions value lots of spices—Mozambique, for example—others do not. Whatever the specific food, it is usually sold by vendors who set up small stands or stalls near markets and on city streets where working people can get breakfast or lunch. Even along roads, travelers will see small stands selling mainly local produce or snacks such as roasted peanuts. Most of the sellers are women who also prepare the food at home. Vending is a major source of income for many families.



A banana seller in Kampala, Uganda. (Courtesy of Bruce Kraig)

## Major Street Foods

### *Ugali*

*Ugali* (also called *sadza*, *posho*, *sima*, and *upswa* among others depending on the local language) is a staple dish made at home, in restaurants, and consumed on streets or as a takeout in people's places of work. It is basically cornmeal mush, that is, dried and ground corn that is cooked in water to either a soft or hard consistency. Corn is not native to Africa, but because it is relatively easy to grow, corn became widely popular after Portuguese merchants brought it from the Americas in the 16th century. *Ugali*, as it is called in Uganda and Kenya, is made in large pots by women vendors who prepare it for lunches. It is rarely flavored, as *polenta* might be in Italy, but is usually eaten on a plate with other foods such as *matoke*, boiled cassava, cooked beans, rice, or a stew. When served with a meat or vegetable stew, some *ugali* is dipped out of the pot, formed into a ball, and then used to scoop up the liquid.

In truly impoverished countries such as Zimbabwe, where severe hunger is a fact of life, cornmeal mush is one of the few foods available. Mostly it is made from white finely ground corn donated by international aid agencies. Though having calories, the corn lacks certain vitamins (niacin and tryptophan) that prevent the disease pellagra. Eaten everywhere, in public and in private homes, cooked cornmeal mush is truly an East African staple.

### *Matoke*

One of Uganda's national dishes, *matoke* is widely eaten in Kenya and everywhere that plantains are grown. Plantains are peeled, wrapped in their leaves, and then steamed in pots for several hours until the flesh is soft. The bland dish is usually eaten with stew, vegetables, and in Uganda with a groundnut sauce. Other versions can be cooked with chilies, tomatoes, garlic, or on the coast of Tanzania with smoked fish.

### Fried Cassava

Cassava or manioc is another starch imported from the New World by Portuguese traders in the 16th and 17th centuries. It is widely eaten at home, but it is also served by take-out restaurants to be consumed with other foods as lunch to be eaten outdoors. The cassava is cut up and boiled, and put on a plate or cassava leaf. It is also grilled on open grills and quite good this way. In Tanzanian cities such as Dar es Salaam, *muhogo* is boiled cassava that is fried and served with cut-up tomatoes and cabbage with a chili sauce.

### Roasted Corn, Roasted Peanuts

Anywhere street food is sold in East Africa, hungry diners will find corn roasting in their husks on an open grill. Depending on the country and region, ears of roasted



Muslims buy food from street vendors along Abdel Nasser Road in Mombasa, Kenya. (AP Photo)

corn are eaten plain, but mainly it is rubbed with lemon slices and served with spicy chili powders called *pili pili* or *piripiri*. Corn can also be served boiled. Peanuts and groundnuts are planted deep in African food culture, so it is no surprise that these are roasted and served in small paper cones almost everywhere as snacks and as sources of protein.

### ***Mandazi***

*Mandazi* is a kind of slightly sweet doughnut popular all over the coastal areas from Kenya to Tanzania. Made from wheat-flour batter, *mandazi* comes in many shapes, some round, but mainly as small pillows of fried dough. The dish can be made with milk or coconut milk or other ingredients to give different flavors. Cooks have large pans filled with hot oil ready to fry fresh batches for customers who like their *mandazi* warm to be eaten plain or as an accompaniment to a stew or soup. Most often, it goes with tea at breakfast or for tea breaks from work.

A similar dish in Madagascar called *mofo gasy* is made from rice batter. It is baked in molds on open grills. Malagasies, as people in the island are called, also have a form of *mandazi*; only there it is called *menakely*. Both forms of cooked batter are very popular as a breakfast street food.

Although made with lentils and chilies, fried balls of dough called *gateaux pi-ments* are a common street food on the island of Mauritius. The dish has a French name, but it is Indian in origin.

## Chapatis

Indians have exerted a huge influence on East African food through long-standing trade and settlement. In India, chapatis are flatbreads made from wheat flour (usually white, sometimes whole wheat) that are rolled out into rounds and baked on a flat griddle or pan. Some are finished by briefly cooking them over open flames. In East Africa, many chapatis are done in the local style, fried in oil. Chapatis are used as wraps and as scoops for other foods in almost every country in East Africa.

## *Nyama Choma*

*Nyama Choma*, or roasted meat, is sold up and down the East African coast and in such cities as Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam in Mozambique. Although most East Africans eat very little meat because of its expense, it is highly prized and widely consumed. Goat is especially favored, though beef, chicken, and pork (except in Muslim areas) are also on the menu. Most of the time, meats are cooked over open charcoal fires, cut up, and served with perhaps a chapati. In Mozambique with its Portuguese and Indian influences, a hot spicy *piripiri* sauce will be served. Although not strictly street food because it might be prepared in a courtyard, in Uganda and Kenya, cooks set up long charcoal-fired grills and cook small split chickens seasoned only with salt and served with chapatis. Roasted chicken, made on grills, called *kuku* is also seen in such Tanzanian coastal cities as Dar es Salaam.

## *Mishkaki*

*Mishkaki* is a popular meat dish throughout East Africa. It is chunks of usually beef or goat that are marinated with spices overnight, then skewered and grilled over charcoal. In most places, it is served with chapatis and, in such cities as Mombasa, Kenya, with an Indian chutney.

## Other Street Foods

### Rolex

This unusually named dish is also called *mugati naamaggi* (literally, “bread and eggs”) or *chappo mayai* in Kenya. A common street in Kampala, Uganda, it is an egg omelet made with chopped tomatoes, onions, and green peppers wrapped in a chapati. Rolex is often available from street vendors in evenings as a snack while strolling the streets or going to movies or the theater.

## Roti

A roti is the same as a chapati. *Roti chaud* (or “hot roti”) is one of the classic street-food dishes of Mauritius. It is a flatbread that is filled and rolled up with cooked and chopped meats, fish, or vegetables and usually a spicy sauce. *Roti prata* is usually filled with chutney, *brèdes* (a kind of amaranth plant), or various tomato-based sauces.

## Sambusa

*Sambusas* are really samosas, the famous Indian stuffed pastry that is found around the world. They can be stuffed with spicy chopped or ground meats or vegetables, and especially potatoes. They are served with chutneys, sauces, or slices of lime. In Mozambique, where Portuguese is spoken, they are called *chamuças*.

## Mutura

*Mutura* is a sausage from Kenya. It is made by stuffing a goat intestine with chopped meat, blood, and spices. It is first boiled, then grilled and sliced into rounds for serving. Like other dishes, it is served with chapatis and perhaps chopped vegetables.

## Seafood

Grilled seafood is sold from open air stalls in many seacoast and lake coast areas. Grilled shrimp, squid, octopus, and local fish are the usual ingredients. Some are grilled whole, and others skewered and made into kebabs. In places like Tanzania and Mozambique, chopped vegetables such as onions and peppers accompany the fish. The food is seasoned with peppers, onions, and coconut.

## Irio and Githeri

*Irio*, also called *mokimo*, is a typical Kenyan street food that is also eaten at home. Corn, potatoes, and greens of various kinds are cooked separately, then mashed together and put on a plate. *Githeri* is similar but simpler, but in Kenya, it is always made from corn, beans, and onions. It can be eaten with stews or soups, but often by itself.

## Fruits

Many fruits grow in East Africa, each kind depending on the local climate. Mangoes, passion fruit, pineapples, papayas, oranges, papayas, pineapples, and, in coastal areas, coconuts are all sold by vendors on city streets and along roadsides.

Bananas are especially important because of their nutritional value and because they are widely grown and available.

### **Kapuku (Rat)**

One of the more unusual street foods is found in Malawi. The country is so poor that field rats have become a popular food. Also called cane rats, these rodents are trapped in fields, killed, and cooked. They are then dried, salted, and then tied to long sticks from which they are sold individually. As such, they are jokingly called “rat kebabs.” Rats are a source of protein for people who desperately need it.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## **Egypt**

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Egypt is a transcontinental country. Most of its territory is in North Africa, while its Sinai Peninsula extends to Southwest Asia. For thousands of years, the Nile has supplied the nation’s ever-growing population with the natural irrigation necessary to cultivate such crops as grains (mainly wheat and barley), legumes, cotton, and a variety of fruits and vegetables. The yearly flooding of the Nile was responsible for fertilizing the land naturally, but the building of the Aswan High Dam in 1970 put a halt to those yearly floods, and since then, Egyptian farmers have had to use fertilizers to keep the land fertile and productive.

Egypt’s rich ancient Pharaonic (dating from the fourth millennium BCE) history has shaped many of the cultural and food traditions that many Egyptians observe

till this day, such as *Sham el Nessim*, the celebration of the beginning of spring. During this feast, Egyptians have traditionally eaten *feseekh*, a fermented salted gray mullet, and green onions. Foreign influences may have had a more lasting impact on Egypt's current food culture. Egypt has been colonized by the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Ottomans, French, and most recently, the British, who were ousted in 1922. Egypt's food culture reflects all these influences as well as the use of spices from other Arab countries. Nowadays, this medley of cultural influences can be seen in the street food of the entire North African region, including Egypt. Turkish coffee and sweets, French-inspired white breads stuffed with herbed meats or spiced legumes, and traditional pastries like *kahk* made with Arabian dates are examples.

Egyptian street food is tasty and cheap, ranging from completely vegetarian items to hearty meat options and quick snacks and fruity drinks. Legumes like lentils and *ful* (broad beans or fava beans) are very popular, as are meat-based dishes like *shawerma*, *kebab* (or *kebab*), *kofta*, and *kibda*, which are often stuffed in a pita bread sandwich. Street food is generally the same everywhere in Egypt, with the exception of some resorts and beach towns. Here one finds more snacks and nibbles (like roasted nuts and bite-sized desserts) than in major cities, where street food represents breakfast and lunch for a majority of working-class people.

## Major Street Foods

### ***Koshary***

*Koshary* is by far the most ubiquitous street food. It is a hearty mixture of protein and carbohydrates made of inexpensive ingredients: rice, lentils, and pasta. Street carts selling *koshary* are found all over Egypt, but college dormitories and lower-income rural and urban areas have the largest representation of *koshary* sales because of the dish's affordability. Also Coptic Christians in Egypt, who comprise 10–20 percent of the population, avoid animal products during Advent and Lent, eating vegetarian dishes that are filling.

During the Egyptian revolution in January 2011, *koshary* was served in liberal amounts to revolutionaries in *Tahrir Square*, giving the carbohydrate-heavy dish instantaneous worldwide recognition. Such Western food online publications as *Serious Eats* published an article explaining the role of *koshary* in the Egyptian revolution and credited the meal for fueling the demonstrators. The article explained *koshary's* significance to Egyptians quite accurately:

Koshary is a food of the people. Though associated with lower classes in Egypt, it would be tremendously ignorant to dismiss it as a “poor people’s comfort food.” Yes, koshary is very cheap to make and eat. But in a country



with mass poverty, its very accessibility underscores the importance in its ability to feed everyone. Egyptians of all standing have fond personal memories of *koshary*. It is as close to a national dish as exists in Egypt and among the Egyptian Diaspora.

### ***Ful Meddames* and *Ta'ameya* Sandwiches**

*Ful*, the fava or broad bean, is the most prevalent legume in Egypt. Of all Egyptian street foods, *ful* sandwiches are by far the most popular and comprise most workers' daily breakfasts. The *ful* mixture is often served either in a pocket pita or in a bowl when it is served at home. Members of the working class in Egypt, especially construction workers and others who have to wake up in the wee hours of the dawn, can be seen lining up in front of carts that sell *ful meddames*. *Meddames*, or *muddamas*, means "mashed" in Arabic. *Ful* is eaten because it's a cheap meal packed with complex carbohydrates and protein that supplies the working body with needed energy.

Typically, *ful* is bought as a dried bean, then soaked overnight, and slow cooked for a few hours. It is served mashed with lime juice and oil and seasoned with cumin, coriander, salt, and pepper, and sometimes a little bit of minced garlic. An Alexandrian version of *ful* features a hot sauce as well. Nowadays, most street vendors use canned beans to save the time and effort to soak and cook dried beans. Accompaniments to a hot bowl of *ful meddames* include fresh arugula and *tahina*, a sesame-seed paste mixed with lime juice and seasonings and made into a sauce. Sometimes hard-boiled eggs are added. Toppings vary among vendors and are individually chosen by the customer. The *ful* vendors also sometimes serve *bitingan ma'ly*, or fried eggplants, as a side to their bean dishes or in a separate sandwich.

A popular rendition of *ful meddames* is a fried version called *ta'ameya*. In the West, there is a version of *ta'ameya* known as falafel, but it is typically prepared with chickpeas (hummus) and not with fava beans as in Egypt. Street vendors all over Egypt sell sandwiches of *ta'ameya* mashed with *tahina* sauce and fresh tomatoes and arugula.

### **Meats on the Street, Egyptian Style**

As in many other countries in the Middle East, many Egyptian street vendors sell *shawerma* sandwiches. *Shawerma* comes from the Turkish word *çevirme*, which means "turning," referring to the way the meat is grilled by turning the spit over a fire for several hours. The meat is usually stacked in alternating layers of fat and seasoned meat compressed together to form a thick block. A large knife is used to slice off layers of *shawerma* that fall into a circular tray underneath as the meat continues to be roasted. The meat used in *shawerma* in Egypt is beef, chicken, or lamb, with the most popular being beef.

*Shawerma* is not a cheap street food like *ful meddames* or *koshary* and thus is not as prevalent as the latter dishes. Many *shawerma* vendors also sell *kebabs*, which are pieces of grilled beef or mutton, and *kofta*, mini meat loaf balls seasoned with parsley and other spices and fried. *Kebab* and *kofta* are removed from their skewers and served in a sandwich or, with skewers intact, are laid on top of rice, with sides of *tahina* sauce along with fresh onions, tomatoes, and lettuce piled on for extra flavor. Beef *shawerma* is often paired with the *tahina* sauce, while chicken *shawerma* is served with an intense garlic-based sauce.

Another meat-based option served in curbside carts is fried *kibda* or liver (usually beef or chicken). It likely originated in Alexandria, because it is called *kibda iskandarani*. Thinly sliced beef liver is covered with lime juice and cooked in sizzling oil along with thinly sliced onions and green peppers, then topped with seasonings and spices, the most popular being cumin, garlic, and lime juice. A lot of people elect to add chili peppers on top for an added kick. *Mumbar*, cow or lamb intestines stuffed with rice and spiced ground beef, is another popular dish that features organs rather than just muscle meats. An Alexandrian version called *sogo* is intestines stuffed with ground beef.

Many kinds of bread are used as sandwich casings for Egyptian meats. The most popular are whole-wheat pita breads, called ‘*eish balady*, and white pita bread, or ‘*eish shami*. (*Eish* means bread, *shami* refers to the Levant, and *balady* means country style.) Some vendors also encase the grilled meats in ‘*eish fino*, or bread buns—a concept likely borrowed from American hamburger buns.



A grill man cook prepares *shawerma* at a sidewalk restaurant in Cairo, Egypt. *Shawerma* is a standard street food in the Middle East and now in Europe and North America. (Pius Lee/Dreamstime.com)

## Other Street Foods

### Nibbles, Snacks, and Drinks

Egyptians like to snack on different foods, especially while they're walking on the *corniche* along the Nile or relaxing at beachfront resorts. A few favorite snacks include roasted mixed nuts, *ful sudani* (peanuts), *leb* (pumpkin or certain melon seeds, dried and roasted), and *fishar* (popcorn). *Termis* (lupini beans) are another popular snack. They are typically soaked for several days and then boiled in salted water. Their outer layer is usually not eaten, so the beans are eaten by tearing a small piece of the skin with the teeth and popping the bean into the mouth, then discarding the skin. Other popular street snacks include *dora mashwi* (corn on the cob), which is served hot off the grill to passersby.

Dough-based snacks are also common. *Simeet* is a dough shaped into a doughnut, but much wider, baked, and covered with sesame seeds. Sold along with the *simeet* is a small newspaper cone filled with spice mixture called *do'aa*, a dry combination of ground cumin, coriander, sesame seeds, salt, and pepper. The hot *simeet* is dipped into the spice mixture and eaten.

One of the most ubiquitous drinks in Egypt is 'aseer asab, or freshly squeezed sugarcane. Sugarcane juice has to be served freshly squeezed; otherwise, it ferments and becomes alcoholic. A popular specialty drink available during the hot summer months is 'erq sous (licorice), which is served cold, often by a wandering seller who has an 'erq sous jug strapped to his body with reusable plastic cups in his hand. Other specialty drinks served from a small juice store or street cart include 'aseer manga (fresh mango juice), 'aseer rumman (pomegranate juice), 'aseer lamoun (lemon juice), tamr hindi (tamarind juice), karkade (hibiscus tea—often served cold), helba (fenugreek tea), and the ever-present shay (black tea) and ahwa (Turkish coffee). However, the teas and coffees are most available in ahawi (cafes), rather than street carts.

### Fruit and Sweet Treats

*Batata* (sweet potatoes) wrapped in foil, cooked on a hot roadside grill, and served hot are enjoyed by many people as a sweet snack or dessert after dinner. *Teen shouki*, a prickly pear cactus fruit, is a popular street food during the summer months. The fruit is often peeled by a glove-wearing vendor to avoid being pricked, and the flesh of the fruit is presented to passersby to eat on the spot. Fresh dates are widely available, especially when ripe and in season in late summer and early fall; otherwise, dried dates are sold from the same vendors who sell roasted nuts. *Kharroub* (carob) is another fruit that is dried and sold in street carts. 'Asal eswed, which means "black honey," refers to molasses, which is carried around by street sellers in large jugs. It is poured into smaller containers that many take home to eat

with *tahina*, the unsalted sesame seed paste. The same vendor usually sells a chewy candy made with molasses called *'asaliya*.

Egyptian street food does not heavily feature sweets, with a few exceptions that are often made with milk. *Roz bi laban* (rice pudding) is made of white rice, whole milk, sugar, and some cinnamon. A similar starchy dessert is *mahalabia*, a sweet pudding made by thickening whole milk with cornstarch and sugar and adding vanilla, rosewater, and pistachios for extra flavor. A liquid version of *mahalabia* is called *sahlab*, which is authentically made with orchid powder instead of cornstarch. Authentic *sahlab* is now very difficult to find: it has been replaced by a simple flavored starchy formula added to the milk.

Desserts that are not made with milk usually contain a lot of sugar and flour. *Fresca* is a sweet snack widely available on the shore that comprises two wafers with sticky sweet nuts sandwiched in the middle. *Basbousa*, a semolina-based honeyed dessert, is overly sweet to many, but enjoyed by those with a strong sweet tooth. Another dessert, called *kunafa*, is made with fried *she'reya* (vermicelli) sweetened with a syrup and sometimes stuffed with a creamy custard. *Luqmet el qadi* (which means "morsel of the judge," though it is actually an Arabic transliteration of the Greek *loukoumades*) is a semisoft dough with yeast that is poured into hot oil and deep-fried, resulting in irregularly shaped balls that are crispy on the outside and very soft on the inside. They are then dipped in sugary syrup; sometimes cinnamon is sprinkled on top. In some places, these sugary treats are called *zalabia*. These are similar in concept to *meshabbik*, another fried dough dipped in syrup, with the difference being one of shape and texture: the *meshabbik* is interconnected dough (similar to a pretzel but less uniform) and with a thicker, less puffy texture than *luqmet el qadi*. Finally, a traditional holiday dessert sold only during religious feasts and festivals is *kahk*, a cookie made with *samna baladi* (clarified butter or ghee), flour, and sugar, and sometimes stuffed with date paste or nuts.

*Heba Saleh*

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# F

## France

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Street food (the French use the English term) has not been as popular in France as other countries for several reasons. A traditional lunch in France is long and comfortable: the custom is to eat slowly and to chat the same length of time after eating. France has a worldwide reputation of culinary refinement, so that a quickly cooked and easy-to-transport meal is the antithesis of French food. France, especially Paris, did have a vibrant street-food scene during the Middle Ages, but when indoor restaurants began to flourish in the 19th century, merchants stopped selling food on the street. However, picnics remained popular at every level of French society and have been shown in many paintings by such celebrated artists as Jean Renoir and Henri Toulouse-Lautrec.

However, today French culinary habits are evolving with the urban way of life. Working people do not have as much time for lunch as they did in the past. As in other countries, students want inexpensive food that can be eaten on the run. Moreover, today street food is being promoted as a healthier alternative to junk food. Some renowned chefs have even entered the market, such as Thierry Marx, who opened a street-food workshop in Blanquefort near Bordeaux and is working on a similar project in Paris. Marx, who has extensive culinary experience in Asia, claims that street food provides an excellent alternative to *malbouffe* (unhealthy eating or junk food). Nevertheless, France does have some traditional street-food specialties. Bakeries, which are found everywhere, sell the long thin loaves of bread called baguettes, sandwiches, crepes, and pastries. French fries are another typical dish. Hot wine and roasted chestnuts are sold on the street during winter.

Some dishes are regional specialties. For example, crepes originated in Brittany and were popularized in Paris by Breton migrants in the mid-20th century. More recently, immigrants from North Africa and the Middle East have taken over a large share of the street-food market. In fact, anyone walking the streets of Paris is more likely to find kebabs, falafel, and pita bread than traditional French products!

Usually street food is sold from stands and fixed stalls rather than trucks, except for the popular pizza trucks along the roads and French fry trucks in the north of France. However, a new trend from the United States is reaching France: food trucks.

## American Food Trucks Come to France

In the spring of 2012, two young American chefs opened Cantine California, which serves tacos, and Le Camion qui Fumer (The Smoking Truck), selling cupcakes and thick hamburgers with fries. Despite warnings that the French would never eat with their hands on the street, the trucks became enormously popular among both American expatriates and hip young Parisians who praise a dish

by calling it “tres Brooklyn.” Most French had never eaten a soft taco, much less one filled with pork carnita and chipotles in adobo, all imported from Mexico. Food trucks are not allowed to drive around but are assigned to certain markets and days.

Julia Moskin, “Food Trucks in Paris? U.S. Cuisine Finds Open Minds and Mouths,” *The New York Times*, June 4, 2012.

Because street food is such a recent phenomenon in France, legislation is virtually nonexistent. The general food and sanitary control services are extremely fastidious though. They depend on both national and European norms.

One is more likely to find street food in walkable neighborhoods of the biggest cities, especially the central and historical districts. In Paris, street food is sold in the Marais, the Latin Quarter, and Ménilmontant. But the neighborhoods of Chateau Rouge and Belleville, which have large immigrant populations, have the largest



Fast food shop near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France. (Lucian Milasan/Dreamstime.com)

concentrations of food stalls. In Chateau Rouge, there are African meat dishes and fruits, and in Belleville, street food from Asia. In the city of Lyon, the neighborhood called le Vieux Lyon and especially the Rue Saint Jean serve traditional French street food while La Guillotière offers more ethnic food. Around the place des Terreaux, there are both.

The south of France has its own local street foods. The most famous specialty of Nice and nearby Monaco is *socca*, a pancake made from chickpea flour, water, and olive oil with a moist interior and crispy outside. It is first cooked on a griddle and then baked in a wood-fired oven. In Vieux Nice, the old part of that famous coastal city, *socca* is served with other such local specialties as *pissaladiere*, an onion pizza, and *pan pagna*, a small bun brushed with olive oil and filled with green pepper, olives, onions, tomato, anchovies, and hard-boiled eggs.

The city of Marseilles on the Mediterranean is home to a large North African population and has a bustling street-food scene, especially in the Noailles, the Arab Quarter. Here tiny food stalls, kiosks or stand-alone tents sell such delicacies as *mahjouba*, large crepes filled with tomato, red pepper, onion, and harissa sauce; flatbreads; kebabs; and *merguez*, a sausage made with lamb, beef, or a mixture stuffed into a lamb-intestine casing, heavily spiced with chili powder or *harissa* and other spices, and grilled. It can be eaten with couscous (a steamed porridge-like dish of tiny granules of dough) or in sandwiches, sometimes served with French fries. Pastry shops sell such North African delicacies as beignets, deep-fried dough sometimes filled with meat or vegetables; makrouds, cookies made of ground almonds; and cornes de gazelles, crescent-shaped pastries made of ground almonds and orange water.

Street food is more widespread at certain times of the year, especially Christmas when there are special markets. In Lyon, *La Fête des Lumières* (Festival of Lights) is held in December. The city is illuminated, and streets vendors are selling French specialties, hot wine, and cider.

## Major Street Foods

### The Sandwich

Born in the United Kingdom, the sandwich reached France in 1830 and was soon available in every café in Paris. The French sandwich is famous for using the traditional crusty baguette. It is split into two halves, then sliced open along its length, buttered, and filled with different ingredients. The most typical and popular, despite its simplicity, is the *jambon beurre* made with ham, butter, and pickles. Sometimes the bread is filled with crudités like tomatoes, lettuce, and cucumber, or with comté or emmental cheese. The standard accompaniment is mayonnaise or Dijon mustard.



The reasons for its popularity are understandable. The baguette is the staple of French food. Sandwiches are inexpensive, usually costing between 3 and 5 euros (\$4–\$6). There are, however, some expensive versions with ingredients like foie gras now on the market. They are wrapped in a piece of paper so are very convenient to eat and are among the few foods French people will eat on the street. Some cafés will let people bring in sandwiches bought from a vendor provided that they buy a drink. A related sandwich is the croque-monsieur. It is made from a square loaf of bread filled with ham and a cheesy béchamel sauce.

## Crepes

The crepe appeared in Brittany around the 13th century. It was originally made with buckwheat, brought by crusaders from the Middle East. Later, white flour was used. The topping can be either salted or sweet. During the 20th century, crêperies opened all over France, especially in the neighborhood of Montparnasse in Paris thanks to the immigration of a great number of Bretons. Like sandwiches, crepes are conveniently wrapped in a piece of paper and can be found at every street-food stand. The usual toppings for salted crepes are ham, eggs, and cheese. Ask for all three and it's a *crepe complete*. Sweet crepes are garnished with sugar, jam, whipped cream, chocolate, or strawberries. At a street-food truck or stand, the dough is usually already made when the customer orders the crepe. The seller cooks the pastry in the oven and adds the garniture in front of you. Crepes are typically sold during celebrations, fun fairs, and children's events.

## French Fries

French fries (*frites*) have a contested and polemic origin and are a subject of dispute between the French and Belgians. The potato was first cultivated in South America and was brought in Europe in the 16th century. The classic version is served from trucks (*baragues à frite*) in the north of the country. They can either stay at the same place all year or move around. Their usual locations are at village or city centers or along national roads with heavy traffic.

French fries can be served in a cone or in a container. The first is usually preferred because the fries stay hot. They are generally served with mussels and ketchup, mustard, or mayonnaise.

## French Pastries

French pastries are baked goods made from a yeast-leavened dough, eggs, butter, milk, cream, and sugar. They are typically eaten at breakfast or as snacks. Among

the best known are the croissant, *pain au chocolat*, brioche, *chausson aux pommes*, and *pain au raisins*.

Croissants are the most popular. They are made from a flaky pastry and so called because they are crescent (croissant) shaped. Baked in the early morning, they are usually served in bakery stands and very convenient to eat in the street. The first croissant was sold in Paris at the beginning of the 19th century, but the current version became a French culinary symbol only in the 20th century. Since the 1950s, the croissant has been a traditional element of the French breakfast. *Pain au chocolat* is a croissant with a chocolate filling; *brioche* a soft, light-textured bread-shaped into a round bun; *chausson aux pommes* an apple turnover; and *pain au raisin* a spiral-shaped sweet pastry with raisins.

## Other Street Foods

### Kebab

Kebab is far more popular in France than hamburgers, especially among students. As in other countries of Western Europe, in France, kebab refers to a sandwich made of meat (usually lamb) that is put on a spit, grilled, then cut into thin slices, and served in pita bread with crudités, French fries, and sauce. It is a cousin of gyros, donor kebab, and *shawarma*. Many kebab stalls were opened by people from Turkey. Kebabs are so popular that they even inspired a rap song “Mange du Kebab” (Eat some kebab).

### Pizza Truck

Although pizza is from Italy, it is very popular in France and a key element of the street-food landscape. Pizza trucks are found not only in cities but in small villages, camp grounds, and along national highways.

### Hot Wine and Cider

Wine is the most iconic French drink. During winter, wines turn into a street drink as vendors sell hot wine—usually red, but sometimes white—and hot cider during Christmas markets and celebrations. The merchant heats the wine and adds such spices as cinnamon, ginger, and clove. This has been done since the Middle Ages with spices received from Asia. Originally a specialty of Alsace, it has spread out all over the country. Cider, a product of the fermentation of apple juice, comes from Normandy. During the *Fête des Lumières* (Festival of Lights) in Lyon, it’s the custom to drink hot wine or cider while walking through the illuminated streets.

*Clothilde Façon*

### Further Reading

Although there are hundreds of books on French food, little has been written on street food. The best general guide to French cuisine is *Larousse Gastronomique*. The current version translated into English is published by Clarkson Potter in 2009.

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# G

## Germany

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Although Germany is an affluent northern country, it has a rich street-food culture. Until the 1990s, however, eating while walking in the street was considered unacceptable behavior, while drinking from a beer bottle in public was a sure sign of homelessness. Today it is normal to see people walking around German streets eating or with a drink in their hands. Fast food carries with it notions of fun and social freedom, especially for young people who want to escape family restraints and meet friends for a quick inexpensive meal.

Fast-food stands, called *Imbiss*, sausage stalls (*Würstchenbude*), and kiosks are especially popular in busy city centers and open air markets, near large department stores and tourist attractions, and in or around train stations. The most popular street foods are freshly squeezed fruit juices and ready-cut fruit, ice cream, pretzels, salads, soup, wraps, *Chinapfanne* (a stir-fry of thinly sliced Chinese vegetables and bean sprouts), all kinds of Bratwürsts (grilled sausages), pizza, pickled, smoked or fried fish in rolls, baked *Leberkäse* (meat loaf), and *Schwenkbraten* (pork roast). In Germany, the modern era of fast food (which is difficult to distinguish from street food) began after World War II.

Kiosks and improvised shacks on bomb sites sprung up to sell whatever food was available. They were modeled on *Trinkhallen* (drink kiosks) that arose in industrial areas in the second half of the 19th century to sell workers carbonated mineral water and other nonalcoholic drinks. Many served regional specialties. In Cologne, for example, some kiosks sold potato fritters and fried meat patties, goulash, and hot sausages. Immigrants, many of them from Turkey, opened fast-food stalls, especially at the end of the economic boom of the 1970s when many lost their industrial jobs. Germany's two most popular street foods are *Döner Kebab*, a form of gyros, and *Currywurst*. American fast-food chains, including McDonald's and Burger King, also have a firm foothold in Germany.

### Major Street Foods

#### Bratwurst (Sausages)

Germany has many kinds of bratwurst, each of them considered to be the cultural heritage of the city or region in which they are made. Strictly speaking, bratwurst

means fried sausages, and in the past they were sold by a *Würstchenmann* (sausage man) who sold them from a metal hot water container hung around his neck. These hot water bathed sausages are also called *Wiener würstchen*. Today, bratwurst is sold mainly by vendors who have round portable grills hanging from their shoulders and an umbrella attached to their backs in case of rain.

### ***Thuringian Bratwurst***

The most famous Bratwurst, *Rostbratwurst*, comes from the central German region of Thuringia, where it has been made since the early 1400s. The cities of Weimar and Erfurt are well known for their sausage stands or *Imbiss*. Thuringers are about nine inches long and made from finely chopped pork or mixtures of pork and beef. They are all natural casing sausages, meaning that the meat is stuffed into pork or sheep gut. Each region of Thuringia has its own flavors, which always include marjoram, but also caraway, garlic or even nutmeg, and ginger. By German law, fresh sausages must be cooked on the same day that they are made, so grilled bratwurst sold in German cities and towns are always completely fresh. Grilling is the preferred way of cooking. In Thuringia, grills are often doused with beer to cool them down to the proper temperature and to flavor the sausages. Thuringers are usually served in a small bun (*Brötchen*) that covers only the middle of the sausage. Mustard is usually the only condiment served. The greatness of Thuringian Rostbratwurst is memorialized by its own museum near Arnstadt.

### ***Nürnberg Bratwurst***

Perhaps Germany's most popular bratwurst comes from Nuremberg in the Franconia region. It is small, around three to four inches long, and made of pork, hence its white color. The main seasoning is marjoram. Nürnberg bratwursts are grilled, preferably over an open flame, and served several at a time. Often street vendors put three into a single small bun. When served on plates, Nuremberg bratwurst is usually accompanied by potato salad (made with vinegar, not mayonnaise) and sauerkraut. Dijon-style mustard is the standard condiment. Under European Union law, any sausage called Nürnberg Bratwurst must be produced only in the city of Nuremberg using local ingredients.

### ***Weisswurst (White Sausage)***

In the southern state of Bavaria, *Weisswurst*, or “white sausage,” is so popular that it is virtually identified as the official state sausage. It is a finely ground pork and veal sausage of medium length seasoned with parsley, onions, and mace. Like other fresh German sausages, Weisswurst should be consumed as fresh as possible

(before noon), but as they are scalded, there is no legal requirement on this. It is simmered in water and then eaten with large, soft Bavarian pretzels, sweet mustard, and with Weizen (wheat) beer.

Weisswurst is the sausage of choice at the Munich Oktoberfest and in many towns for Carnival (Mardi Gras), held on the Tuesday just preceding Lent. Each year, thousands of visitors attend Oktoberfest and gobble, especially in the morning and during the day in beer tents. At night, they consume heartier dishes such as grilled chicken and pork knuckles.

### ***Berlin Bockwurst***

Bockwurst is a thick sausage, a version of a wiener or frankfurter, made from veal and pork. It is usually smoked first and finished by cooking in simmering water. It can also be grilled, but heated until the case splits. It is served as street food, especially at fairs and festivals. It is accompanied by brown mustard, horseradish, and sometimes sauerkraut.

### ***Currywurst***

An unusual candidate for Germany's most popular street food is currywurst—a finely grained, grilled pork sausage cut into bite-sized pieces, sprinkled with curry

## **Mustard**

Sausages are rarely served without mustard, a very old condiment. It seems that human beings have always liked piquant (or “hot”) flavorings in their food, especially if the food is somewhat bland. Mustards belong to the same family of plants as cabbage and broccoli (*brassica*) and have some of the same sulfurous flavor compounds that makes cabbage “smelly” when cooked. Mustard seeds contain volatile oils whose “hot” flavors disappear quickly when the seeds are crushed. Vinegar is one way to preserve those tastes, which is why prepared mustards have that sour undertone. Mustard was a main food flavoring in Medieval Europe, where three main kinds

were cultivated: white or yellow, brown, and the spicier black. German mustards are typically made from brown seeds and are usually milder than English versions. The mustards served in sausage stands in German-speaking countries come in several forms, ranging from the standard mild yellow products to hot Düsseldorf, Löwensenf, and sweeter Süßersenf versions in the south. Germans migrating to the United States brought brown mustard with them, and it is still used where German and East European traditions linger. In recent years, a mildly spicy French variety called Dijon has become popular in public dining places.

powder and paprika, and topped with tomato ketchup. It is prepared *mit* or *ohne*—with or without skin—and *scharf* or *extra scharf*—hot or extra hot, depending on the sauce. Options include a white roll and French fries (called *Pommes* or *Fritten*) topped with ketchup, mayonnaise, or both. Customers purchase it from sidewalk stalls, called *Imbissbuden*, and from food trucks and eat it standing up with a small plastic fork on a paper plate. A serving costs the equivalent of \$3.00. Almost a billion currywursts are consumed in Germany every year, and a study indicated that 80 percent of Germans consider it a central part of their diet. There is even the world's only Currywurst Museum near Checkpoint Charlie (marking the old dividing line between East and West Germany before the nation was reunified in 1989) in Berlin. The dish is so dear to the German heart that a fight has emerged over its origins. It is the quintessential Berlin street food, and Berliners claim that it was invented in 1949 by Herta Heuwer, owner of a snack bar the site of which is now marked with a plaque. One explanation for its invention is that when a British soldier in occupied Berlin asked for a curry, Frau Heuwer served him a sausage sprinkled with curry powder. However, residents of Hamburg claim that currywurst was first made in their city in 1947 by Lena Brucker, the central character in a 1993 novel by Uwe Timm called *Die Entdeckung der Currywurst* (*The Discovery of Currywurst*) that has been made into a film.



Döner kebab is hugely popular in Germany and has spread to the rest of Europe. Brought to Germany by Turkish immigrants, it has almost replaced sausages as the number one street food. This restaurant is in Berlin, Germany. (AP Photo/Gero Breloer)

## Döner Kebab

Also called Döner, it was introduced in Berlin in the early 1970s by Turkish immigrants. However, it has little in common with its Turkish and Persian prototypes, which are mutton or lamb roasted on a spit and more closely resembles Greek gyros. Meat—originally mutton, but now often mixed with beef, chicken, or turkey—is marinated with salt, spices, onions, milk, or yogurt, and formed into long oval block, thicker at the upper end, and weighing 4–22 pounds. Most of the blocks are made by special producers. The block of meat is placed upright on a spit and slowly rotates around an electric grill. As the outer layer cooks, it is cut off in thin strips in with a long knife and falls into a metal scoop underneath the block. The meat is served in a quarter of a Turkish pide (pita), a round flatbread, cut open to form a pocket. Alternatively, it can also be wrapped in a very thin bread called Yufka to make a dish called Dürüm Döner. It is topped with sliced lettuce, tomatoes, onions, and red cabbage and a yogurt sauce. Hot red chili flakes are optional. The result is a fat pouch that takes some practice to eat without spilling it over one’s clothes.

## Other Street Foods

### *Frikadellen* or *Bouletten*

*Frikadellen* is a German and Scandinavian word for “meatball.” More literally, meatballs are called *Fleischkloesschen*, or “meat dumplings.” In Berlin, they are called *Bouletten*, supposedly from a French word meaning “pellets.” *Frikadellen* are made from ground meat, mixed with egg, water or milk, dried breadcrumbs, and seasonings such as salt and pepper, parsley, and marjoram. Made into small balls, they are fried in oil or until browned. They are sold from street stands, accompanied by mustard and ketchup.

### Pizza

Pizza is so popular that it is virtually a naturalized dish. As street food, it is often sold under the name of Minipizza, similar to the Italian pizza al taglio. Recently, there has been a renewed interest in quality, replacing plastic cheese, canned mushrooms, and vinegar-brined peppers with fresh ingredients.

### Falafel

Some döner stands serve Lebanese falafel as an alternative for vegetarians. These are deep-fried balls of pureed chickpeas served with tahini (sesame seed sauce) in a pita flatbread.

*Colleen Taylor Sen and Bruce Kraig*



### **Buletten**

How individual foods got their names is often mysterious. One of these is the term “*bouletten*, or *buletten*” used in the German city of Berlin as a synonym for “frikadellen,” or meat balls. Frikadellen are the most famous dish of Scandinavian Europe, especially Denmark, which borders on north Germany. This word descends from early terms for frying, maybe from the Latin word “*frictura*” or “*frigere*,” or it could be a word for “steamed meat.”

Because the word *bouletten* seems to be French in origin, it was thought that the term came to Berlin and its region in the 1600s when French Protestants, called Huguenots, sought shelter from persecution in France. Another possibility is that the word came into use when the Napoleon Bonaparte, the emperor of France, conquered and occupied the area in 1806. The French word for meatballs is *boulettes de viande*. A third possibility is that French cuisine and culture was so much admired by other Europeans that chefs in Berlin picked up the term and used it to mean really good or fancy meatballs. Whatever the origin, *bouletten* has stuck as a Berlin food term.

### **Further Reading**

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## **Great Britain**

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Ideas about street food in Great Britain have changed in the past 40 years. In the mid-20th century, it was considered bad manners to eat and drink in the street. This social rule has vanished, and it is now commonplace to see people eating on the hoof. The change probably reflects a return to an earlier norm, when many, especially the poor, availed themselves of street food.

Street food as items made from cheap local ingredients sold from temporary stalls is a rarity, but many items relate to the idea. They are impossible to separate from takeaways (hot meals from specialist shops), snacks from bakers, supermarkets and chain stores, and fast food. The popularity of hot ready-to-eat foods has been affected by the imposition of tax, especially for poorer people who traditionally relied on them as treats or easy meals after work, and stringent hygiene regulations.

Types of food and the phrases used for it have social and regional nuances: for instance, a hot meal purchased from a shop is a takeaway in England, but a carry-out in Scotland.

## London in the 1860s

The relative poverty of British street food is recent. In 1861, the social reformer Sir Henry Mayhew described the street sellers of eatables and drinkables in his work *London Labour and the London Poor*. They included sellers of pea soup, hot eels, pickled whelks, fried fish, sheep's trotters, baked potatoes, ham sandwiches, pastries, pies, boiled puddings, plum dough or duff (a type of pudding), curd and whey, cakes, ginger nuts, ice creams, and medicinal confectionery among other things. To wash them

down, one could buy ginger beer, sherbet, lemonade, elder wine, rice milk, or peppermint water. Coffee stalls (apparently an innovation since the 1840s, when the common hot drink had been saloop, a version of Turkish salep) were popular and sold other hot drinks as well as sandwiches, boiled eggs, bread and butter, and watercress. Mayhew vividly described the vendors, their wares, and their customers and detailed the daily and seasonal rhythms associated with the different foods.

## Major Street Foods

### Fish and Chips

Fish and chips is the major British contribution to the world's repertoire of street food. It is filleted white fish, usually cod or haddock, but possibly other species such as plaice or rock salmon (dogfish), dipped in batter and deep-fried, accompanied by coarsely cut chips (fries). Fried potatoes are sometimes mentioned as a 19th-century street food, and cold fried fish was hawked in north London streets by Jewish peddlers. Where and when the two got together is unknown (both London and northern England between Bradford and Manchester are suggested), but they were popular by 1900 and have remained so.

Fish and chips are usually prepared in special fish and chip shops whose opening hours (generally midday and from 5:00 or 6:00 P.M. until late) reflect peak times of demand. Until worries developed about printer's ink, portions were invariably served on newspaper, at which point the question "Open or wrapped?" indicated a choice. Buying open meant immediate consumption in the street, seasoned with malt vinegar and salt. The smell of hot fat, vinegar, and newsprint evokes memories of frosty evenings for many Brits. Wrapped indicated that they would be taken home and eaten in private, a treat to which even those with status to defend sometimes succumbed. There are regional preferences for certain fish (a wider variety in cities, especially London) and the frying medium (beef dripping in parts of northern England).

Scraps, fragments of batter detached during cooking, could be added. Mushy peas (dried green peas cooked to a puree) are often available. Curry sauce, a type of thick heavily spiced gravy, evolved sometime in the 1960s or 1970s. Fish cakes, slices of fish between two slices of potato, were also available until recently. A chip butty is a sandwich, a white bread bun with chips and tomato ketchup or brown sauce.

Sausages dipped in batter and fried, roast chicken portions, and meat pies are also sometimes sold in fish and chip shops. Mediterranean travel led to a demand for squid rings dipped in batter and deep-fried. Late 20th-century developments associated with Glasgow included haggis, pizza, and infamously, Mars Bars, each item coated with batter and deep-fried.

### **Meat Pies and Pasties**

Pies, usually beef, with onions and sometimes potatoes are a common snack food. They are sold from hot cabinet bakeries, fish-and-chip shops, and other outlets. Pasties are similar, but the pastry is folded to enclose the filling, with a seam down one side. They are a traditional food of Cornwall, but the idea has spread well beyond the southwest of England and has recently become the basis for a chain of shops. Sausage rolls, sausages baked in pastry, are also popular.

### **Ice Cream**

Perhaps the most ubiquitous street food is ice cream. In parks, at fairs, on seaside promenades, and around housing estates, roving ice-cream vans announce their presence by tunes played on chimes. Under the brand name Mr. Whippy, they dispense vanilla-flavored soft ice cream piped into wafer cones, with optional raspberry syrup. A “99” has a flake (a type of flaky chocolate bar) stuck into the ice cream. Other companies also sell ice cream made with varying degrees of authenticity and ranges of flavors. Although well known in England before the end of the 19th century, ice-cream selling as a trade was vastly expanded by an influx of Italian immigrants who sold hokeypokey from chill cabinets mounted on bicycles.

### **Shellfish and Seaside Foods**

Seaside resorts have a strong tradition of street foods. As well as outlets for fish and chips, ice cream and seaside rock (candy sticks with patterns or words running through them), shellfish stalls are a feature of these towns. Portions of shellfish, especially tiny brown shrimps (*Crangon crangon*), prawns, cockles, winkles, whelks, dressed crab, and latterly crabsticks (made from fish protein and crab flavor), are sold for immediate consumption. They are usually sprinkled with vinegar and eaten from disposable packs using wooden forks.

## Fairs and Markets

Hot dogs made from frankfurter sausages heated in water served in a split roll with mustard and onions are sold at funfairs and other outdoor meetings. Toffee (candy) apples and candy floss (cotton candy) are also often sold at fairs, but fairings (usually sweet biscuits spiced with ginger) are now mostly extinct as fairground food.

The range of foods sold in fairgrounds, at agricultural shows, and in farmer's markets has expanded in the last 20 years to include hot sandwiches of grilled bacon or sausages, and hog roasts of pork, served in bread buns with sage and onion stuffing and apple sauce.

A strong London tradition, sometimes found in other cities, is a winter one of hot roast chestnuts, cooked over coals and sold with a little salt.

## London and Lancashire: Two Special Traditions

The "Eel, Pie and Mash" shop featured in poorer areas of London, especially the East End. They sold eels boiled and cooled in a jellied mass, or hot with liquor, a thin green parsley sauce, and mashed potatoes. Small meat pies were an alternative. Such shops still exist but are fewer.

Black puddings and black peas are a tradition of urban markets of southwest Lancashire. Black puddings were heated in hot water and served with mustard. Black peas, small round dried peas cooked until soft and served hot and dressed with vinegar (always malt), were sold in markets and at fairs. These have declined in popularity as the industrial communities that demanded them also declined.

## Sandwiches

The sandwich, a favorite form of transportable snack from its origin sometime in the late 18th century, has developed a multiplicity of forms. Originally sliced ham or beef with mustard between two slices of bread, these have evolved into a vast range, from more traditional bread rolls filled with meat or cheese and salad to wraps of flatbread around Chinese- or Indian-style fillings, panini with cured meat and cheese, and filled croissants. They are available from many outlets, but most obvious in supermarkets, chain stores, and chain cafes that have become a feature of the British high street, also selling coffee, soft drinks, and pastries to takeaway. Fashion and marketing both play a part in the choices presented.

## Foreign Influences

Immigration has brought food from the Mediterranean, China, and India to Britain. Turkish döner kebabs, minced lamb cut in slices from a mass mounted on a

spit, served in pita bread with salad are now sold from hot food shops and vans as a late-night snack. Pizzas are available from many independent and chain shops. Takeaways selling Indian or Chinese food can be found at any settlement above the size of a large village, although the food is often taken home for consumption. Other imported ideas include chains selling fast-food burger or fried chicken.

*Laura Mason*

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## Greece

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Street food is not quite as widespread in Greece as it is in other countries in the region. One reason is the ubiquity of coffee shops that serve snacks (*meze*)—and tavernas—small informal eating establishments offering bread appetizers, salads, soups, mains dishes, wine, and ouzo for lunch and dinner. Most have outdoor areas with chairs and tables that spill onto gardens, courtyards, even the pavement. They are typically open from noon until late at night.

However, in urban areas, street food is an important source of breakfast for many Greeks, especially in the capital Athens in the south and Greece's second largest city Thessaloniki in the north. Morning commuters purchase freshly made *koulouri* (small ring-shaped bread covered with sesame seeds) and little pies from mobile vendors or local bakeries. They can be eaten in one's hands. *Koulouri* street vendors generally close down their stands at noon. Some even sell their wares at traffic lights to commuters in their cars. Later in the day, vendors offer the famous Greek dishes gyros and *souvlaki* from mobile carts as midday snacks or a light meal. Some operate throughout the night for late-night revelers.

Greek street food goes back to ancient times when the first cities emerged in the sixth century BCE. Two modern street foods that can be traced to antiquity are the *koulouri* and the cheese pie. Many of these foods were rediscovered during the Byzantine period (330–1453 CE) and continued to be made under Ottoman rule over parts of Greece, which lasted from the 15th century until Greece won its independence in 1821. In the Ottoman capital Istanbul (formerly Constantinople), there were many mobile street vendors, many of them Greeks and Armenians who specialized in a single item. Their wares included pilaf, fried liver, meatballs, roasted chickpeas, coffee, and salepi, a drink made by boiling orchid root that was sold in Athens as late as the 1930s.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, these street foods were brought by immigrants to Athens and the Greek Mainland. The tradition of grilling meat on a stick over coals is one of the most ancient cooking techniques; Greek *souvlaki* are a version of kebabs (*souvla* means the stick on which meat was cooked). The climate and terrain favors breeding of goats and sheep over cattle, so beef dishes are uncommon. Normally fish and seafood are not sold as street food.

The street-food business in Greece is dominated by men. Women play a minor role, largely because regulations forbid the distribution of home-prepared food by street vendors. The only cooking technique allowed on the street is barbecuing (a traditional male occupation). The ingredients are supplied from commercial companies. Thus, all the *koulouria* in Athens are supplied by three or four specialized bakeries, five factories supply pita bread to all parts of Greece, while special butcher shops prepare.



A baker poses next to breads and koulouris (bread rings) at a bread festival in Thessaloniki, Greece. (Eleftherios Damianidis/Dreamstime.com)

## Major Street Foods

### *Koulouri*

This ancient bread has inspired others such as the identical Turkish *simit*. It is a round ring-shaped bread with a hint of sweetness topped with sesame seeds. They are eaten for breakfast or a snack, either as is or cut in the middle and filled with butter, honey, jam, turkey, tomatoes, olives, and other ingredients. They are sold both in bakeries and by street vendors in markets. On Sundays, there are sold outside churches.

### Gyros

Probably the best-known Greek food worldwide is gyros. The name means “round” or “circle,” referring to its method of preparation: slices of lamb or pork (increasingly popular because it is cheaper than lamb) are placed around a long vertical metal

skewer that rotates slowly in front of an electric bar. The heat melts the fat, and the turning cone of meat becomes brown. The meat is sliced off, placed on a whole pita bread (a round unleavened bread made from white flour), and served with various accompaniments, such as tomatoes, onions, lettuce, or even French fries. In Athens, it is topped off with a dollop of *tzatziki*, a sauce made of strained yogurt (usually from sheep or goat's milk), cucumber, and garlic. In northern Greece, it is sometimes served with mustard or ketchup. The gyros is wrapped in a piece of paper and served in a cone to the customer who can eat it standing or sitting if a table and chairs are available. Gyros have become a standard fast food in North America.

A variation is *donor kebab*, which came from Turkey. It is made from ground beef and/or lamb shaped into a cone around the skewer. In the early 1970s, the use of ground meat was banned, but the prohibition was later lifted.

### ***Souvlaki***

This ancient dish was mentioned in the works of Aristophanes, Xenophon, and Aristotle. Meat, usually pork, is cut into one-inch cubes, marinated in lemon juice, olive oil, and herbs and spices (such as mint, oregano, thyme, basil, and garlic), strung on little wooden skewers, sometimes separated by vegetables, and broiled. Customers order it plain (*sketo*) or with pita bread garnished with sliced tomatoes, onions, and *tzatziki*. A variation is *kalamaki*, which means little sticks. (However, in northern Greece, the word is not used since it means drinking straw.) Sometimes the pita bread is sautéed in the meat drippings.

### **Pies**

Small pies, called *pittes*, are the breakfast of choice for many Greeks and are sold in every neighborhood by mobile vendors, bakeries, and specialized little shops. Thin flaky sheets of phyllo dough or puff pastry are filled with custard, feta cheese made from sheep, or goat's milk cheese and honey, spinach, eggplant, artichoke, and other vegetables.

## **Other Street Foods**

### **Sweets**

Some vendors sell *loukoumades* or Greek doughnuts, balls of fried dough. They are sold by the dozen or half dozen. Another popular sweet is *chalvas*, or honey-cake, made of semolina baked in butter and scented with cinnamon and cloves. The halva of the Middle East and Balkans made of sesame paste is also sold in Greece.

## Snacks

Many vendors sell roasted and salted peanuts, chickpeas, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds (called *passatempo*, meaning “to pass the time,”), and *pastelli*, sesame seeds covered with honey, especially during festivals and sporting events.

## Corn on the Cob

Roasted corn on the cob has become a popular street food sold by street vendors on summer evenings and is especially loved by children. In the winter, the same vendors often sell roasted chestnuts.

## Salepi

In the winter, vendors in central Athens traditionally sold this white thick drink that goes back to ancient times. It is made by boiling the pulverized root of a species of orchid (*Orchis mascula*) that grew in the mountains with water and sweetening it with honey or sugar, and flavoring it with cinnamon or ginger. However, salepi vendors are becoming fewer as coffee becomes the drink of choice. Moreover, the plants are threatened with extinction because of overharvesting and are now protected by law, so most vendors sell salepi made from cornstarch, sugar, and artificial flavoring.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Guyana

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Guyana is situated on the northern coast of South America and is the only English-speaking country in that continent. It shares much common history and culture with the Caribbean Islands and is considered part of the Caribbean from a cultural point of view. The country was first charted in 1499 by Spanish explorers and was originally known by the name that the native Indians used: Guiana, which means “land of many waters.” Guiana was passed back and forth among several European powers and was a bone of contention between the Dutch and British for several centuries. By the early 19th century, the British had gained a firm foothold and were to remain there until 1966 when the country went from being a British colony to an



independent country and the name changed from British Guiana to Guyana. It was declared a Republic in 1970.

Guyana was valuable to the Europeans as a producer of sugar. Native Indian tribes such as the Arawaks kept to themselves and were not part of the labor force. African slaves kept the sugar industry running, and after the abolition of slavery in 1837, laborers were brought from China and India. Indians were accustomed to agricultural work in hot conditions and were soon arriving in increasingly large numbers. Most of them stayed on after their contracts expired and now make up almost half of the country's population, closely followed by those of African descent. Native Indians (known as Amerindians), descendants of the Chinese and Portuguese, as well as a small number of other Europeans form the rest of the population. Street food shows many of these varied influences.

Street food is sold at the side of busy roads, in and near ferry and bus terminals or taxi stands, at markets, and outside schools. Although guidelines are issued with regard to public safety and hygiene, they are difficult to enforce and small stalls can appear overnight. They are usually stocked with a few home-style items cooked in a domestic kitchen.

## Major Street Foods

### Bakery Items

*Salara*, a yeast bread with a spiral of sweet red coconut filling, is sold in slices, and plain sweet buns are also popular. Pastries show British and Asian influences. The three most popular are pine tarts (triangles of shortcrust pastry with a filling of pineapple jam); cheese rolls (a thin round of shortcrust pastry with a spicy cheese filling rolled into a cylinder before being baked); and Chinese cakes, made from a Chinese-style flaky pastry that is filled with sweetened black-eyed pea puree. Some vendors buy tennis rolls (sweet round yeast buns flavored with lemon oil) from bakeries and resell them, split and buttered and filled with cheese.

### Sweets

Coconut drops (a kind of coconut ice also known as sugar cakes) are widely sold. They are made from finely grated fresh coconut cooked in syrup and shaped into small cakes. When the coconut is cut into tiny chips instead of being grated, they are often known as chip-chip. Tamarind balls are sweet, sour, and spicy all at once. Tamarind pulp is mixed with sugar, garlic, and chilies and shaped into tiny balls. Cassava pone is a dense, chewy cake made from manioc; a touch of black pepper is often added.

## Savory Snacks

Plantain chips (crisply fried, salted green banana slivers) are to Guyanese what potato chips are to Americans. Fried salted peanuts are sold in small packets. Tiny savory dough sticks called “salt-seo” are made primarily with flour and a little chickpea or split pea flour. They are the economical local take on the snack sticks known as *sev* in India.

Chickpeas (garbanzo beans) are a popular item and are prepared in two ways. One way (fried channa) is to soak the dried peas overnight, then rub off the skins and split the peas before frying them, and seasoning them well with salt and chilies. In the second method (boiled channa), the soaked peas are boiled until tender, then fried with sliced onion, cumin, and other spices. The latter is served with hot pepper sauce or sour green mango sauce known locally as “sour.”

*Bara* and *Phulourie* are both snacks of Indian origin, made from ground split peas, seasoned with chilies, garlic, and green herbs, and then deep-fried. *Bara* is flatter and palm-sized with a heavier texture, while *Phulourie* is a soft walnut-sized puff. They are also served with sour mango sauce or spicy green mango chutney. Potato balls are deep-fried balls made from highly seasoned mashed potato.

Salt-fish cakes are an even more delicious treat. They are similar to potato balls, with the addition of small flakes of rehydrated salted cod to produce a pronounced flavor. Black pudding is made the local way: cooked rice is seasoned with herbs and spices before the blood is added, and the mass is stuffed into well-cleaned intestines to be boiled. It is served in thick slices together with a relish made from bilimbi (*Averrhoa bilimbi*), a tart fruit that looks like a tiny cucumber. Schoolchildren are very fond of sliced green or half-ripe mangoes that are seasoned with salt, vinegar, and chilies.

## Beverages and Coolers

Sugarcane is pressed through a small machine with rollers to extract the refreshing sweet juice. *Mauby* is a drink with a slightly bitter undertone made from the bark of a kind of buckthorn, boiled with sugar and various spices. Coconut water drunk straight from an immature green coconut is a great thirst quencher. After the water has been drunk, the vendor splits open the shell so that one can scoop out the flesh, which is so young that it is transparently white and gelatinous. Snow cones start off solid and quickly turn into liquid in the tropical heat. They are made by producing finely shaved ice by hand with metal shavers or by using a special machine. It is packed into a paper cup and topped with the buyer’s choice of sweet fruity flavored syrups and/or sweetened condensed milk. It is eaten like an ice-cream cone and then drunk from the cup as it melts.

*Gaitri Pagrach-Chandra*

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# H

## Haiti

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The Republic of Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic, has a unique history and culture. Christopher Columbus landed here in 1492 on his first voyage to the New World and claimed the island for Spain. After the Spanish wiped out the native Taino, they brought slaves from Africa to work on the gold mines and sugar plantations. In 1697, Spain ceded the western part of the island to the French, who called it Saint Dominique, and brought another million African slaves. In 1791, the slaves revolted; in 1804, having defeated the armies of Napoleon, they created the independent republic of Haiti (a variation of what the Taino called their homeland). In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Syrians and Lebanese came as traders.

Today, Haiti has a population of nearly 10 million in an area of 10,000 square miles, making it one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in the world. In 2010, Haiti, and its capital Port-au-Prince, was devastated by a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that killed between 200,000 and 300,000 people and left a million homeless.

The Haitians have a distinctive Creole cuisine, called *manje kreyol* in the local French Creole, which reflects French, African, Middle Eastern, and, more recently, American influences, with a dash of Spanish and Amerindian for good measure. The basic flavoring is *épis*, a spice mixture made from local chilies, which are moderately hot, garlic, green onions, thyme, and parsley. The most popular sauce is *ti-malice*, a spicy mixture made from tomatoes, onions, and local chilies. Tomato sauce, sometimes made from imported tomato paste, is used both as an ingredient and as an accompaniment.

Street food is popular, especially for breakfast and lunch in the cities. A common sight is Haitian women elegantly balancing bidons (pots) full of hot *mayi bouti* (boiled corn) or *akasan* (a drink made from corn flour) on their heads as they peddle their wares. Young boys carry baskets of popcorn or fried plantains and sell soft drinks, including a local, very sweet orange soda called Juna. Vendors with wheelbarrows or portable carts on wheels line the sidewalks and cluster together at street corners. They cook the food on small metal charcoal or propane stoves and display it in round woven trays, metal bins, or wooden trays or sometimes simply on clothes spread on the ground. The customers eat standing or sitting on



A woman carries apples and cookies for sale on a street in downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)

plastic chairs. A common breakfast sandwich is fried egg with slices of tomato and hot sauce.

## Major Street Foods

### Rice and Beans

As it is elsewhere in the Caribbean, the staple dish of Haiti is rice and beans (*diri kole ak pwa*)—brown rice with red kidney or pinto beans lightly flavored with onions and garlic. It is often accompanied by barbecued meat or fish and topped with tomatoes and onions or served with *bouyon*, a stew made of potatoes, tomatoes, and goat or beef.

### Patties (Pates)

Staples of parties in Haitian homes, these celebrated appetizers are also sold by some street vendors. Delicate layers of puff pastry are filled with beef, chicken, cod, spinach, cabbage, and other vegetables. Unlike Jamaican patties, the filling is not usually spiced with curry powder, and the crust is not colored yellow.

## Griot

Cubes of pork are marinated in a dressing of sour orange, onions, and garlic and then deep-fried. The dish is often served during festivals.

## Fried Plantains

Ripe plantains are cut into slices, fried in oil, and smashed a bit after cooking to soften them. They are served with a side dish of *pikliz*, a spicy pickle made from carrots and cabbage.

## Corn

*Mayi*, creole for corn, is boiled or made into *akasan*, a sweet thick drink made from milk, corn flour, and spices that may be drunk hot or cold, especially at breakfast. Nearly every Latin American and Caribbean country has its own version, since corn originated in the region. Another nutritious dish is cornmeal mush (*mayi moulen*) cooked with kidney beans, coconut, and peppers.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Hong Kong and Macau

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### Hong Kong

*Hong Kong* (Chinese: for “fragrant harbor”) is a city state on the south coast of China enclosed by the Pearl River Delta and the South China Sea. It is one of two special administrative regions of the People’s Republic of China, the other being Macau. With a population of 7 million people in an area of 426 square miles, Hong Kong is one of the world’s most densely populated areas. Its population is 95 percent ethnic Chinese, mainly from neighboring *Guangdong* province. The British made Hong Kong a colony after the *First Opium War* (1839–42) and later extended its territory to Kowloon and the New Territories. It was returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 but has autonomy in most matters except foreign relations and military defense. Hong Kong citizens have the world’s second longest life expectancy—perhaps a tribute to its fabulous variety of food ranging from street food to international haute cuisine.

Though operating on Hong Kong for hundreds of years, many food stalls remained unlicensed until after World War II, when the government issued licenses to the families of deceased civil servants. These so-called *dai pai* or big licenses led

to so many small street stands that traffic was soon disrupted. Traffic problems, plus concerns about hygiene, led the government to limit such licensure. This old-age trade has also been threatened by property developers. In 1980s, the government started buying back the licenses to control and regulate the spread of street vendors in Hong Kong. Today a few of the old-style food stalls (called *dai pai dong*) remain.

Because today many street-food vendors in Hong Kong operate out of permanent buildings, the perceived safety of this food is much higher than it might be in other countries; thus, these vendors serve tourists as readily as locals. Many vendors offer large tables for use by the general public, and it's common to share a table with strangers. Patrons can also order items from different stalls: noodles from one and drinks from another. Moreover, Hong Kong has a large number of restaurants, many of which offer street seating. Unlike the street markets in many other Southeast Asian cities, these seating arrangements in Hong Kong make the bustling markets seem somehow less hectic.

Though there are smaller pockets throughout the booming metropolis, street markets in Hong Kong are largely collected into three major areas.

- **Temple Street Market.** This is basically a night market that comes alive as the sun goes down. It is popular among tourists, and many of the vendors operate out of permanent structures.
- **TsimShaTsui** on Haiphong Road in the Kowloon Peninsula. Here street food is sold amidst fashionable boutiques offering glamorous clothing and electronics.
- **Mongkok.** Known as the “ladies market,” it not only specializes in women’s wear, but also has a sizable and wonderful market in prepared foods.

Because many vendors at Hong Kong’s major markets operate out of permanent structures, they have the flexibility to prepare food in a number of different ways, including wok- and deep-frying, open grill, and stove top. This also means that they are likely to have hot and cold running water and other amenities that meet Western expectations regarding sanitation.

## Major Street Foods

Hong Kong has been a trade center for many centuries, and its central location in Asia made it very attractive to the British, who won the territory in concessions granted by the Chinese after the Opium Wars. Now, this central location benefits lovers of street food by allowing them to sample products that arrive from all over Asia.

### *Egg Waffles (Gai Daan Tsai)*

Somewhat surprisingly, waffles have become a very popular street food in Hong Kong. Made from egg, evaporated milk, flour, and sugar, these Asian waffles are unlike the dimpled flapjacks found throughout the West; instead, these simple pastries are of semispherical shapes, a little smaller than golf balls, that are cooked in a custom-made waffle iron and look like an upside-down egg carton. Often a waffle maker has three or four skillets steaming away at the same time. Because they are relatively bland, they may be dressed with sweet sauces or honey as well as hot sauces.

### *Seafood*

Given Hong Kong's location, it's not surprising that seafood has a major presence at street markets. Squid and octopus are especially popular, with different items more prevalent in specific markets. For instance, in the Temple Market, crab is a big seller, offered by many large restaurants with street-side seating and frequently served with a heavy complement of garlic and hot chilies. Often prices are not published, and the price of menu items sees sometimes based on the whim of the server, so bargaining may be in order.

### *Noodles*

Noodles are popular in Hong Kong, and because they're usually eaten in a bowl, many street-side restaurants serve a wide range of noodle preparations, sometimes



Waffles being sold on the street in Hong Kong. (Courtesy of David Hammond)



fried and topped with meat, fish, or vegetables; steamed; or added to soups. Some common noodle preparations include

- Wonton noodle soup with beef brisket, a very hearty bowl
- Fish ball noodle soup, which is lighter and in no way fishy
- BBQ pork noodle soup combines Asia's favorite animal with what is certainly one of Asia's favorite starches (second only to rice)

### ***Balls***

One logical way of using the meat of an animal or fish is to grind it up, shape it into balls, and string several on a stick. Stick-mounting makes these balls very easy to eat while walking on the street.

### ***Congee***

Though not an ideal street food to eat while walking, congee is served at most Hong Kong markets, especially by vendors that offer seating. Congee is a porridge made of grains such as rice, cornmeal, millet, barley, and sorghum and is eaten with sweet or spicy condiments, such as fresh crab, fish, 100-year-old eggs, fermented bean curd, or chicken with ginseng. Its easy digestibility is very good for the stomach, especially after eating more adventurous foods.

## **Other Street Foods**

### ***Offal***

As is the case at markets throughout Southeast Asia, Hong Kong markets sell a lot of offal, frequently grilled. Mongkok has several stands selling pig intestine deep-fried to a chewiness that somewhat minimizes the funky taste, though a blast of hot sauce definitely helps.

### ***Dim Sum***

Though popular in Hong Kong, dim sum, the small dumplings with a huge range of fillings, are seen only sporadically in markets. Because such items require steaming immediately before serving and are consequently quite hot, they are best enjoyed sitting at a table.

### ***Fried Chicken***

Often at the Mongkok market, the longest line is for a fried chicken vendor. Such a fried food item is ideal for small vendors who lack seating; it's very easy to eat a piece of fried chicken while walking through the market.

### ***Pretzel Preparations***

Many vendors offer “pretzel fish,” “pretzel pork chop,” and other items that may not actually contain any pretzels in the Western sense of the word. Rather, the word *pretzel* seems to refer to a light brown breading that contains neither pretzel nor salt.

### ***Vegetables***

Though not as flashy as grilled and skewered food items, many stalls that sell meat or fish also offer fried eggplant and peppers, which add color to street food and can provide a healthy balance to what might otherwise be rather rich fare. Many times, however, the vegetables are breaded and fried, mitigating the health benefits.

*David Hammond*

### **Further Reading**

Best Hong Kong Street Food: <http://www.venere.com/blog/hong-kong-street-food/>

Hong Kong Street Food: <http://www.travelbyfood.com/streetfoodhongkong1.php>

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## **Macau (Macao)**

Macau, also spelled Macao, is located on the western side of the Pearl River Delta across from Hong Kong. Like Hong Kong, it is one of the two special administrative regions of the People’s Republic of China. A former Portuguese colony, it was administered by Portugal from the mid-16th century until 1999 when it was transferred back to China. Its economy is heavily dependent on casino gambling and tourism. The 30 square km area consists of a peninsula and two small islands.

Macau’s cuisine is a blend of Portuguese and Chinese influences. The basis is Portuguese, especially stews, enhanced by local ingredients. The territory has not only many restaurants and cafes but also a vibrant street-food life in the city’s markets. Along the beachfront, many sell fresh seafood including prawns, squid, scallops, and abalone that is grilled or deep-fried. An extremely popular specialty is jerky made from dried smoked beef, pork, or chicken.

### **Major Street Foods**

#### ***Curry Fish Balls***

A favorite in Hong Kong as well, these are deep-fried balls of ground fish served in a sauce made of soy sauce and curry powder. The balls can also be made of crab meat, fish mixed with cheese, or meat.

### ***Portuguese Egg Tart***

Sold in bakeries and street stalls, Portuguese egg tart (*pastel de nata*) is a small baked pastry tart filled with egg custard. Popular in Portugal and former Portuguese colonies, they were invented more than 200 years ago by Catholic nuns in Portugal.

### ***Pork Chop Bun***

Probably the most famous Macau street food, this consists of a bun that is crisp outside and soft inside filled with a freshly fried pork chop.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## **Hungary**

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The Republic of Hungary is a landlocked Central European country that borders on Romania, Ukraine, Austria, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Slovakia. It has a population of 10 million, about one-fifth of whom live in the capital Budapest, and an area of 36,000 square miles. Much of the country consists of flat to rolling plains and low mountains. Though Hungary is blessed with fertile soil and is a major agricultural producer, the cuisine is dominated by meat, especially pork.

Hungarian is a language unrelated to its neighbors, but its culture is fully integrated with Central Europe. For centuries, it was part of the Hapsburg dominions, later called the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Hungarian chefs and bakers influenced the Imperial capital, Vienna, and in turn the Hungarian capital, Budapest, mirrored the culture of the Empire. Hungarian cuisine remains one of the most influential in Central–Eastern Europe. Hungarian wines are world famous, and *gulyás* (goulash) and paprika are the country's best-known contributions to world cuisine. However, Hungarian street food is much more diverse.

Street food is sold at tourist places such as squares, fortresses, bridges and parks, and also at seasonal fairs and festivals, where vendors sell dried fruits, seeds and nuts, popcorn, *vattacukor* (cotton candy), roasted chestnuts and potatoes, *forró bor* (mulled wine), and traditional pickled vegetables (gherkins, onions, peppers, etc.) sold by the piece from large vats and barrels filled with salty and sour brine. A remnant from the Communist era are the mini-markets/groceries with street entrances that sell fruits, vegetables, drinks, nuts and seeds, dry sausages, cheese, and breads.

## Major Street Foods

### *Gulyás*

Although served and eaten in homes and restaurants, *gulyás* (“goulash” in English) is an inseparable moment of the Hungarian street-food experience. It is a stew of potatoes and veal/beef chunks, cooked and served in an aromatic, thick, and rich paprika-infused broth.

### *Lángos*

The best-known Hungarian street food is the ubiquitous *lángos* (which means “flamed”): a savory, yeast flatbread that is deep-fried on the spot and served plain or with different toppings, including garlic oil, cheese, sour cream, or jam.

### *Kolbász (Sausage) and Sandwiches*

*Kolbász* is sold in stands and kiosks and served in a *szendvics*, or grilled sandwich and as a hot dog or *wimpi* (the sausage is served on an open-faced bun) accompanied by bread, pickles of choice, and mustards or other condiments. Especially interesting is the *mangalica kolbász (szendvics)*, made of the meat of the special, particularly flavorful and fatty, velvety-and-gamey-in-taste Mangalica Hungarian pig.



A woman serves a traditional grilled meat dish at a fair on Vorosmarty Square in Budapest, Hungary. (Lara Clarence/Dreamstime.com)

### Meleg Szendvics (*Warm Sandwich*)

A thick slice of toasted bread with *sonkás* (ham) or *sajtos* (cheese) or *tejfölös* (sour cream) is another street-food classic. Hamburgers are common, made of a pork–beef mix, and served on large buns with salad and/or fries and sauces. Fries, especially twisted or curly fries and wedges, can be purchased separately, accompanied with ketchup and other condiments.

### Sweets

For those with a sweet tooth, a classic is *palacsinta*, a thick crepe, rolled and filled with sweet or savory filling. A uniquely Hungarian street-food delicacy is the *kürtőskalács* (chimney or tunnel cake)—sweet milk loaf cake dough that is grilled around a thick vertical spit to make a cylindrical hollow cake that is topped with crushed nuts, ground walnuts, cinnamon, vanilla, cocoa powder, caster sugar, or coconut flakes, all of which stick nicely to the warm dough. Another dish popular with Hungarians is *fagylalt* (ice cream); usually several scoops are served in a small cone on top of each other. In summer, one can also buy *hókrisztály* (literally meaning snow crystal, and similar to an ice slush)—ground/crushed ice with a shot of brightly colored fruit syrup.

## Other Street Foods

### Pizza

Small shops or makeshift kiosks sell some or all of the following dishes: pizza (by the slice), and pizza variations such as *töki pompos* (small deep-dish pizza squares), and the recently popular *kenyérlángos* (bread langos), also known as *langalló* (a newly coined word). The latter is a pizza-like dough baked in the oven and topped with butter, sour cream, cheese, ham, salami, onion, or yellow paprika, among other ingredients.

### Soup

Small establishments sell various kinds of *leves* (soup) in small takeout cups. Flavors change daily and include chicken, beef, vegetable, dumplings, cream of potato, and cream of mushroom. These places typically also sell *kávés* (coffee to go), as well as cold beverages such as mineral water, soft drinks, and beer.

### Bakeries

Bakeries on every street corner sell an array of breads, pastries and doughs such as *kifli* (yeast-and-milk dough triangles), *zsemle* (rolls), *perec* (pretzel), *pogácsa* (round savory filled dough), pita (sheet pastry filled with ground meat, spinach,

cheese, etc.), and various cakes, including *beigli* (sweet poppy seed or walnut yeast roll) and *rétes* (strudel). Many of these delicacies are sold in cake shops, which are more elegant establishments with tables and chairs that also serve more intricate layered cakes, the most famous of which is *Dobos torta*. They also offer coffee and tea.

*Katerina Nussdorfer*

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## Iceland

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Iceland is an island in the North Atlantic Ocean, just touching the Arctic Circle. Because even the summers are fairly cold and often windy and wet, this is not a climate that will spark a rich street-food culture.

The country was settled in the 9th and 10th centuries AD, mostly by Norwegians and other Scandinavians, although recent gene research indicates that a large portion of the women they brought with them came from the British Isles. Despite this, there is very little Celtic influence to be found in traditional Icelandic cooking. It is Scandinavian in origin but heavily influenced by the harsh climate and conditions of this remote land that was for centuries at the very edge of the known world. Almost no grain was grown in Iceland, nor any vegetables or fruits. There was a lack of firewood, and even salt was scarce and expensive, so the Icelanders developed their own methods of preserving food, mostly by covering it with soured whey or *skyr*, a yogurt-like dairy product. The settlers brought pigs, but they gradually disappeared so Icelanders ate mainly lamb and mutton.

During the first thousand years of Iceland's history, not only was street food virtually unknown but so were taverns, inns, and even street markets. There were no villages, no places where food of any kind could be bought, except at the farms themselves. During the summer, a few ships braved the treacherous seas between Iceland and Europe to trade with the locals and markets sprung up at several harbor sites. There may have been food stalls, but no one knows for sure what they offered.

The modern culinary history of Iceland can be said to begin in the mid- or late 19th century, when villages and small towns began to appear along the coast. The upper class of these villages, merchants and craftsmen, were mostly Danish and Norwegian, and they brought with them their food culture. Upper-class Icelanders that returned after receiving their education in Copenhagen joined them in having a great influence on Icelandic food. Most of the dishes today considered old-fashioned home cooking are Danish in origin, sometimes with an Icelandic twist: they are made with lamb instead of pork, for instance.



## Major Street Foods

### Hot Dogs

Hot dogs are the most popular street food in Denmark and in Iceland; Danish-style hot dogs are the only real street food. They are very popular and can be bought almost anywhere. There are a few stands in Reykjavík and some larger towns that sell only hot dogs and cold sodas, but they are also sold at many small shops, gas stations, and virtually every roadside shop around the country. In many cases, they will be the only hot food available to travelers.

An Icelandic hot dog (*pylsa*) is always a wiener. The most popular brand is made from a mixture of lamb, beef, and pork although other brands may be made from pork or a pork and beef mixture. Traditionally, it is simmered in water although some vendors now cook it on a flat grill. The only equipment needed is a hot dog cooker with two compartments, one for simmering the wieners and the other for steaming the buns.

The *pylsa* is served in an elongated bun or small bread that is split almost into two, along with a choice of toppings. The most popular are tomato ketchup, mild gravy-like mustard, rémoulade, crunchy fried onions, and raw chopped onions, and that is exactly what customers who ask for “one with everything” will get, even if the stall offers other types of toppings as well. They may include pickled gherkins, chili sauce, cocktail sauce, Dijon mustard, potato salad, or even a creamy mayo-based shrimp salad. Grilled hot dogs may also be bacon-wrapped.

The best-known hot dog stall in Iceland is without doubt *Bæjarins bestu*, a small shack in downtown Reykjavík that has been run by the same family since 1937. There is always a line, even in pouring rain, but the clientele changes through the day: first businessmen or laborers grabbing a late breakfast or quick lunch, then tourists or hungry locals on their way home from work, youths on their way to a movie or people going to a bar. On weekends, the stall stays open until 4.30 in the morning to serve people enjoying Reykjavík’s boisterous night life. There are no fancy extras here, just the basic toppings. The stall has had some famous clients, and those who ask for a *Clinton* will get a hot dog with mustard, which is what U.S. president Bill Clinton had when he stopped by.

### Sandwiches

Many shops and stalls sell various types of prepacked sandwiches and sometimes have a microwave oven or grill so hungry customers can warm the sandwiches they buy. Although there are also hamburger stalls, none of the international chains are represented. (McDonald’s left Iceland after the economic crash of 2008.) Downtown Reykjavík has two very popular submarine and sandwich shops: *Höllabátar* at Ingólfstorg (and now at various other locations around the country) and *Nonnabiti*

in Hafnarstræti. Both serve juicy submarine sandwiches with meat, seafood, cheese, and various other fillings. Each has its own secret sauce, and both are extremely popular with late-night revelers. But no truly local street food has emerged, despite various attempts to create versions of popular traditional dishes, like *plokkfiskur* (mashed fish).

There is one exception, although it is more a takeaway than actual street food. BSÍ, the bus terminal near downtown Reykjavík, has a cafeteria, *Fljótt og gott*, that operates an all-night drive-through counter selling snacks, beverages, hot dogs, hamburgers, and more and was for many years the only place in the capital where you could get anything to eat after midnight. Their specialty is *kjammi og kók*, a halved lamb's head, singed and boiled, served cold with a bottle of Coke. The popularity of the dish is said to have soared after the movie *Jar City* was released in 2006, as its main character, world-weary policeman named Erlendur, often stopped by BSÍ to buy himself a *kjammi* to munch on.

*Nanna Rögnvaldardóttir*

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## India

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South Asians love to snack. Every city, town, and village in this vast country of more than 1 billion people has its roadside stands and hawkers. Indians eat street food at breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as an afternoon snack (often taken home for tea), and during festivals when special dishes are prepared. Vendors set up shop near office buildings, schools, railway stations, beaches (such as Bombay's Chowpatti Beach or Chennai's Marine Drive), Hindu temples, Sikh gurdwaras, mosques, and in crowded markets, such as Delhi's ancient Chandni Chowk or Mumbai's Khao Gali (food lane). There are an estimated 300,000 street-food vendors in Delhi and 130,000 vendors in Kolkata alone.

The Hindi word for vendor is *wallah*, which is attached to the name of the item being sold; for example, *kebabwallah* and *paanwallah*. Most *wallahs* are men. Their cooking equipment includes grills, *tawas* (a flat heavy griddle), *karahis* (a wok-like pot used for deep frying), or sometimes little more than a burner and a kettle to make tea. Street food can be savory or sweet, and often is vegetarian. This vastly expands the potential audience, since many Hindus do not eat meat or items that come in contact with it. Also, meat is expensive.

Many street foods are seasonal: roasted corn and sweet potato are favorites in the winter, and certain fruits in the summer. But everywhere you go, any time of the day or night, you'll find vendors selling chai—hot milky sweet tea served in disposable clay cups. Chai can be either plain or masala—boiled with various spices, such as ginger, cardamom, cloves, and even red chilies. In Western India, it is sometimes served in saucers to cool the liquid quickly.

Street food is made to order and eaten on the spot, since in a hot climate, it is not safe to eat dishes that have rested a while. Some stalls have a few rickety chairs and tables, but usually the dishes are eaten standing or on the move. Food safety is a major problem because many vendors have no access to clean water or disposal facilities, and often cook and handle food with dirty hands. In 2007, the Delhi city government tried to ban the preparation of food at street stands, in a move supported by India's High Court, but the order proved unenforceable and has not been implemented. In theory, hawkers are licensed but in practice, only a small minority are, with the result that they are subject to harassment and demands for bribes by officials. Also the residents of more upscale areas sometimes object to the presence of street vendors.

As a result, to a certain degree, street food is moving off the street, especially in urban areas. Chains like Jumbo King in Bombay and The Great Kebab Factory offer sanitized versions of traditional dishes. Street-food courts are being added to modern urban shopping malls. Western fast foods are making inroads into India, and hot dogs, made from meat, vegetables, or paneer (a hard milk cheese), are especially popular. India has at least one food truck, "Nick's Mom" in Hyderabad, run by an Indian living in the United States.

For many Indians, street food evokes Proustian memories from childhood. As the journalist Santosh Desai writes, "Home food was wholesome, nutritious and predictable. It came accompanied by its own set of rules," whereas on the street, "food was wickedly delicious and fiendishly compelling." He continues:

Street food exists for the tongue. Having avoided being classified as serious food with its attendant responsibilities, it is free to explore the nuances of our palate without worrying about wholesomeness. It is often greasy, spicy and unhygienic, and we love it.

Perhaps because of this nostalgia—and the sheer experience of eating on the street in the midst of humanity—street-food stalls continue to thrive, despite sporadic attempts at its suppression.

India is a vast country of 16 official languages, 8 religions, and countless ethnic groups, each with their own customs. Thus, every city and region in India has its own special street foods. However, as transportation and communication improve and people move elsewhere in search of jobs, many foods have become universal and are enjoyed throughout not only India but also Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

## Chutneys

A chutney (from a word meaning to lick) is a spicy sauce that accompanies many Indian, Pakistani, and Afghan street foods. In India, the three most popular are red, green, and brown. Red chutneys are tomato based and slightly sweet. Brown sauces are sweet and sour

because of tamarind, dates, and jaggery (brown sugar). Green sauces are made from coriander, mint, and green chilies and can be quite hot. Ketchup (introduced by the British in the 19th century) is another popular accompaniment and is perfectly authentic.

## Major Street Foods

*Chaat* (from a Hindi word meaning to lick) is a generic term for the savory fried spicy snacks that are the archetypal Indian street food and in recent years have appeared on the menus of many top restaurants (at many times the original price). *Chaat* is also the name of a specific dish: a mixture of crumbled fried dough and potatoes, sometimes lentils or chickpeas, a spice blend called *chaat masala*, gur (jaggery, a gritty brown sugar with a distinctive flavor), coriander leaves, yogurt, and two or three chutneys (sauces). The most common chutneys are a sweet-and-sour brown sauce made with tamarind and jaggery and a green sauce of coriander leaves, mint, and green chilies. A dollop of yogurt is added to aid digestion. The result is an appetizing combination of flavors—sweet, sour, hot, and cool. Each serving is made to order, served in a paper cone, and eaten on the spot.

Although Mumbai is famous for its *chaat*, the dish is most likely North Indian in origin. One of the most popular chaats in North India and Pakistan is *channa chaat* (also called *channa masala* or *chole masala*). The vendor starts with a layer of boiled chickpeas to which he adds (in order) boiled potatoes, finely sliced green chilies, chopped onions, and tomatoes. He tops this with a sour tamarind and a sweet mango chutney, yogurt, and *chaat masala*. According to legend, this dish became the rage in the 14th century at the court of a Delhi ruler whose physician recommended it to keep stomach problems and germs at bay. A common accompaniment is *bhatura*—a large slightly puffy wheat bread.

*Papri chaat* starts with *papris*—crisp fried round wafers made from white flour and oil—to which are added boiled potatoes and chickpeas, tamarind and chili sauces, yogurt, *chaat masala*, and a sprinkling of *sev* (thin crispy noodles made from wheat flour).

One of the most popular chaats is called *gol gappa* in Delhi, *pani puri* in Mumbai, and *phuchka* in Kolkata. It consists of a serving of puris—tiny rounds of a flour or semolina dough that are deep-fried until they puff up into hard hollow balls. The balls are punctured and filled with mashed potatoes or boiled chickpeas and then dipped in a sour or savory liquid that may contain tamarind, cumin seed, lemon

juice, mint, or dates and goes inside the puri. The customer must pop the whole thing into his or her mouth to prevent it spilling all over.

A variation is *dahi puri*, in which beaten yogurt is poured over the stuffing. Typically five or six puris are served on a disposable plate made from leaves or paper.

Originally a popular snack associated with the city of Mumbai, *bhelpuri* became so popular that it has turned up on the menu of upscale Indian restaurants. Recipes start with a base of puffed rice and boiled potatoes, topped with *sev* (deep-fried noodles), onion, coriander leaves, *chaat masala*, and brown and green sauces. At the request of the customer, the vendor can add tomato, peanuts, more chilies, diced mango, and other ingredients. Another popular chaat consists of seasonal fruits sprinkled with *chaat masala*.

Kebabs are grilled or roasted meat dishes that probably originated in Central Asia, where nomads roasted chunks of meat over a fire. Their relative ease of preparation makes them ideal candidates for street food, since all that is needed is a grill and wood or charcoal. They are usually served with bread, such as *naan* or *paratha*, and dipping sauces. The vendors are often Muslim, and in cities like Delhi and Hyderabad, kebabs are sold outside mosques. The common meats are goat, chicken, and beef (although the latter is avoided by most Hindus). Spicing can be intense and includes garlic, ginger, and such aromatic spices as cardamom and cloves.

*Boti kebabs* are chunks of meat marinated in yogurt, spices, and herbs, threaded on a metal or wooden skewer and roasted over charcoal. *Kathi kebabs* are boti kebabs wrapped in a roti (a soft round wheat bread) and mixed with onions, chilies, and sauces. This dish, which originated in a restaurant called Nizam in Kolkata, is typically served wrapped in paper and is a favorite of students.

*Seekh kebabs* are sausage-shaped kebabs made from ground spiced lamb or goat threaded on long skewers and grilled. *Kakori kebab* and *galouti kebab* are light, delicate kebabs made with meat that is ground extremely fine and whipped.

A kebab that is also popular in Iran and Afghanistan is *shammi kebab*—a disk-shaped patty resembling a hamburger made of spiced ground meat and chickpeas beaten until they are light and airy and lightly sautéed in a pan. *Chapli kebab* (from

## Masala

Masala means a mixture of spices and has many variations. While each vendor has his own special version, chaat masala often contains ground coriander and cumin seeds, dried red chilies, black pepper, black salt, and sour mango powder. Garam masala (“warm mixture”) is

often sprinkled on top of a dish, such as kabobs or biryani, to intensify the flavor. Its components vary depending on the region and the vendor, but a typical North Indian garam masala is likely to contain ground coriander, cumin, chilies, cloves, and nutmeg.

the Persian word for “sandal” because of its shape) is a large flat round kebab made of ground meat that is popular in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and North India.

*Kofta* is a generic term for a dish of well-kneaded ground meat mixed with vegetables, grains, and other ingredients and formed into balls, patties, or sausages. Koftas may be grilled, fried, steamed, or sautéed. *Pasinda kebabs* are long strips of meat marinated in yogurt and spices, threaded on skewers, and baked or grilled.

Indian workers returning from the Middle East have introduced *shawarma*. Shaved lamb, goat, or chicken is compressed on a rotating spit, grilled, and sliced off as needed. The meat is placed on a flatbread and topped with chutney or ketchup.

*Jalebis* are pretzel-shaped orange-colored coils of chickpea batter drizzled through holes in a spoon into boiling oil and soaked in sugar syrup that may be flavored with lime juice or rosewater. *Jalebis* are served either hot or cold. The sweet is of Arab origin and came to India in the 14th or 15th century. The most famous vendor is Delhi’s Old Famous Jalebiwala in Chandni Chowk, which has been there since 1884 and sells only jalebis and samosas—a mouth-watering combination.

*Pakor*as (*bhajis*): These fried fritters are a universal favorite and a popular tea-time snack. Chopped potatoes, onions, cauliflower, eggplants, spinach, egg, or paneer are coated in a spiced chickpea flour batter, deep-fried, and served with a spicy green chutney or ketchup (which is totally authentic!).

Now a staple of Indian restaurants and cocktail parties, *samosas* remain a popular street food that people often take home to enjoy at afternoon tea. In the vegetarian version, mashed potatoes, peas, red chili powder, turmeric, and other spices are wrapped in a white wheat flour dough that is formed into little triangles, deep-fried, and served with coriander or mint chutney. A nonveg version is filled with ground spiced meat, usually lamb.

Throughout India, hawkers sell fresh fruit and vegetable in season. Radishes, cucumbers, and tomatoes are sliced on the spot and sprinkled with a mixture of *chaat masala*, salt, and fresh lemon juice. Seasonal fruits are finely sliced and layered with marmalade and paneer to make fruit sandwiches.

Slices of fruits in season—mangoes, pineapples, oranges, grapefruit, jackfruit, and many fruits without Western equivalents—are a popular street food.

## Frozen Sweets

*Kulfi* is an ancient and very delicious sweet that can be flavored with dozens of ingredients, the most popular being mango, pistachios, and cardamom. Cream is frozen in triangular molds around a little twig or stick.

Western-style ice cream served in a cone is very popular. *Golas* are a poor man’s version—basically crushed ice balls bathed in a colored flavored syrup, sprinkled with lime juice, black salt, and pepper, and served on a stick. There are hundreds of flavors, including traditional ones like mango, mint, rose, and orange and modern

flavors such as chocolate and cocktail. The customer slurps loudly while licking the gola to remove the syrup, which the vendor will replenish.

### ***Paan* (Betel Quid)**

Chewing betel nuts (areca nuts, the fruit of the Areca palm) wrapped in betel leaves (the leaves of a climbing vine) is a practice throughout Asia, including the Indian subcontinent, where it is called *paan*. The technical term is *quid*, a word related to the word *cud* and means something that chewed for a long time.

*Paan* is eaten at the end of a meal to stimulate saliva and gastric flow and freshen the mouth. It is said to have a mild stimulant effect, so it is used by truck drivers to stay awake. While *paan* is not considered narcotic, it can be habit forming. In recent years, there have been movements to restrict its sale and consumption both on sanitary grounds (chewers spit out copious amounts of red saliva onto city streets) and for health reasons since it is a cause of oral cancers. Sometimes tobacco is added.

*Paan* is prepared and sold by *paanwallahs* (always men) who station themselves outside offices, shops, and residences. They prepare the *paan* to order from a small stand on wheels with little compartments containing various ingredients. Watching the *paanwallah* at work is part of the fun. First he trims a fresh green betel leaf into a three- by five-inch rectangle and applies a white dab of slaked lime (*chuna*) onto the leaf. Then he smears the leaf with *kattha* or catechu, an astringent sticky brown substance made by boiling wood from the Areca palm. To this, he adds dried betel nuts cut into thin slices or little pieces.

If nothing more is added, it is called *sada* (plain) *paan*. The *paanwallah* can add tobacco and such spices as cloves and cardamom to create *tambaku paan*. Another option is *mitha* (sweet) *paan*, which has a filling of coconut, dried fruit, rose petal jam, cloves, cardamom, and other spices. If the customer has special requests, the *paanwallah* will do his best to accommodate them.

The *paanwallah* folds everything into a neat little triangle-shaped package, sticks in a clove to hold it together, and hands it to the customer who pops the entire bundle into the side of his mouth. He chews the *paan* until it disappears, which can take several hours. Some people swallow the juice, and others spit it out.

### **Other Street Foods**

Spicy roasted *corn on the cob* (in Hindi *bhutta*) is a staple of street food in India, as in many other developing countries since it is inexpensive and requires no special equipment to prepare. In India, it is associated with the monsoon season. After roasting over hot coals until the kernels start to blacken, the corn is generously sprinkled with a spice mixture that is unique to each vendor, but always includes red chili powder and salt, and then sprinkled with lemon juice. Sometimes the corn is boiled and served with a tamarind chutney.

*Momos* are steamed dumplings filled with meat or vegetables originated in Tibet and became popular among hippies and trekkers in Nepal in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, they are one of India's most popular street foods, especially among students who enjoy them with a spicy chili sauce.

## Cold Drinks

India can be searingly hot, especially in summer when temperatures in North India can reach 115°, so there are many cooling refreshing drinks sold on the street. Fresh limes or lemons are squeezed and mixed with sugar and salt to make *nimbu pani*.

*Lassi* is a cold yogurt drink that may be either salty or sweet. In the salty version, the yogurt is beaten with cumin seed, water, and salt until it is frothy. The sweet version is made of yogurt, sugar, and sometimes crushed banana or mango pulp.

*Jal jeera* is a mixture of ice water, lemon juice, cumin powder, salt, and sometimes mint. Many vendors sell sugarcane juice, made by pressing the stalks on the spot, and coconut water.

*Sugarcane juice* is popular throughout India, especially in the summer months. It is squeezed by roadside vendors using special equipment and served fresh in glasses with or without ice. Sometimes lemon, ginger, and mint are added.

## Regional Specialties

### Northern India

A popular street food associated with the state of Punjab is *chhole batura* (also called *chhana masala*): boiled chickpeas, sometimes mixed with boiled potatoes, fried with turmeric powder, ginger, sour mango powder, and other spices and garnished with green chilies and lemon wedges. They are served with a puffy deep-fried bread, such as *bhatura* or *puri*.

Tikka/tikki, a word that means “bits” or “pieces,” takes several forms. Chicken tikka consists of pieces of chicken brushed with clarified butter and grilled over coals. Panir tikki are cubes of hard cheese marinated in spices and lemon juice, threaded on skewers and grilled. Alu/aloo tikki are small patties made of mashed potatoes, pas, ginger, garlic, and other spices sautéed in oil. Sometimes *panir* or chickpeas are added.

The Indian subcontinent is a paradise for bread lovers, with hundreds of varieties. In North India, a popular bread is *paratha*, a flaky unleavened wheat bread lightly sautéed in oil. It can be served plain or filled with many ingredients, including meat, potatoes, peas, cauliflower, and paneer. The country's most famous *paratha* vendors are found in Parathe Wali Gali, a lane in Old Delhi's Chandni Chowk market. Patrons enjoy their freshly made parathas sitting on little stools and tables in rather grubby surroundings. On the final day of Ramadan, the Muslim fast, vendors



outside mosques prepare giant *parathas* several feet in diameter that they cut into pieces and serve with sweet halwa.

*Puris* are small disk-shaped breads deep-fried until they puff up into spheres. Potato curry is a common accompaniment, and the combination is a best seller in all railway stations. Chapatis (also called rotis) are flat round wheat breads roasted on a griddle.

*Dahi vada/bara* are savory balls made of black lentils (urad dal) that are soaked in water overnight, ground with ginger and other spices, deep-fried, then smothered with fresh yogurt and sprinkled with cumin powder, chaat masala, and a sweet-and-sour tamarind chutney.

The old city of Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh is famous for its delicate meat-based cuisine that developed at the court of the local Muslim rulers. A famous street food is *galauti kebab*, a patty made of finely minced leg of lamb that is first smoked, flavored with onions, ginger, garlic, saffron, and a secret spice mixture, and sautéed on a griddle.

In Northern India, especially on the outskirts of cities, highways are lined with dhabas—small wayside stands with a few tables for the convenience of truck drivers and other travelers. In traditional dhabas, the customers sit or semi-recline on handwoven rope and bamboo cots. Some sell only vegetarian food; others sell also meat. The typical menu features five or six dishes served from large brass pots, such as *palak paneer*, spinach with cheese; *malai kofta*, vegetable balls in a creamy gravy; omelets; and *makani dal*, a rich black bean stew, accompanied by chapatis or naan. The standard drink is chai.

Today dhaba food is becoming fashionable, especially among young urban professionals who drive out of town on a weekend to visit a favorite dhaba. Customers can sit at tables and chairs in an air-conditioned room and enjoy soft drinks and bottled water with their meal.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

## Western India

Mumbai (formerly Bombay) is the Indian city most famous for its street food, especially along the Chowpatti and Juhu beaches, where colorful seaside stalls sell delicious snacks, especially *bhelpuri*. In their *Street Foods of India*, Vimla and Deb Mukerji describe the scene this way:

Each vendor is an expert and has a special style of serving his fare—some juggling the assorted ingredients in a leaf bowl, some continuously making a tac-a-tac sound hitting and scraping the griddle with a metal spatula, and others pouring and mixing a bright red fruit drink with crushed ice. None of these vendors are smartly dressed or wear gloves. They touch the food, nonalcoholic drinks, fruit juice and money with their unwashed fingers, but that neither deters the milling crowd surrounding them nor does it detract from the delicious taste of their wares. It is the same story all over the length and breadth of India.

A local version of hamburger, *vada pav/pao*, may be Mumbai's most popular and distinctive street food. (TV chef Anthony Bourdain called it the best thing he ate during his 2007 culinary tour of India.) Mashed, boiled, spiced potatoes coated with a chickpea batter are deep-fried and wrapped in two slices of *pao*—a western-style white bread of Portuguese origin (the Portuguese occupied nearby Goa until 1955). It's served with dry peanuts and a sweet-and-sour chutney. *Pav/pao bhaji* is one of the fastest street foods to prepare and a favorite among workers in Mumbai. Left-over potatoes and other vegetables are mashed on a griddle with tomatoes and spices, simmered for a few minutes to form a gravy, and then served with butter western-style rolls, onions, and sliced lemon. Variations are made with cheese, mushrooms, bananas, buttermilk, and dried fruits.

A cousin of *vada pao* that is a specialty of the city of Pune is *daabeli*: two buttered toasted buns filled with potato, grated coconut, and onions, seasoned with green and brown chutneys and topped with roasted peanuts and *sev* (nicknamed called India's Sloppy Joe), a thick



Vegetable sandwiches are a popular Indian street food dish, especially with students. Slices of cooked beet, cucumber and tomatoes topped with green chutney are served between two slices of toasted western-style bread, here prepared by a street vendor in New Delhi. (Courtesy of Colleen Taylor Sen)

### ***Pao/Pav Bhaji***

During the American Civil War, the North's blockade of the South ended cotton exports to Britain. The British turned to India as a source of cotton for their mills, and the cotton traders of Bombay became extremely busy (and rich) as a result. They had to work all night

when orders and prices were wired in from America and Europe, and their need for food was met by street vendors who invented a late-night special: *pav/pao bhaji*: leftover mashed vegetables fried quickly on a griddle with tomatoes and other spices.

gravy of potatoes, tomatoes, peas, and onions flavored with coriander and spices and served with Western-style bread. Another hybrid that is a great favorite with students is grilled vegetable sandwich. Slices of cooked beet, cucumber, and tomatoes topped with green chutney are served between two slices of toasted western-style bread with tomato ketchup to taste.

*Ragda-Pattice* is a mixture of mashed potato sautéed on a griddle, then served on a bed of spiced chickpeas garnished with minced onions, chilies, coriander, chutneys, and sev.

The former Portuguese colony of Goa, famous for its hybrid haute cuisine, has a lively evening street-food scene as well. A favorite is the ras omelet: a plain omelet dipped in a spicy coconut-based gravy, garnished with lime and onions, and served with pao. Chicken legs or local fish are fried and served with a cabbage salad. A *xacuti* burger is shredded chicken in a thick sauce served between slices of a whole wheat bread called pole (a concession to health concerns).

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

## Southern India

India's southern states do not share the chaat experience to the same degree as the rest of the country but have their own specialties, many of them vegetarian and based on rice and lentils. *Idlis* are disk-shaped breads made from a batter of fermented rice and urad dal that is steamed and served with spicy *sambar*—a thin, spicy lentil soup, sometimes containing vegetables, and coconut chutney. *Dosas* are large round thin pancakes made of a batter of ground rice and urad dal that is mixed with water, lightly fermented, and poured onto a griddle where it is lightly fried. It too is served with a coconut chutney and *sambar*. Two other popular varieties are *masala dosa* filled with boiled potatoes, onions, and spices and *rava dosa*, made of semolina and white flour. *Idlis* and *dosas* have become universally popular in India and the West: one street stall in Mumbai offers 27 varieties, including a Chinese dosa and a noodle dosa.

In Chennai (formerly Madras), *idli* and *dosa* stalls, called *thattukadai*, are usually run by women. The king of street food is *burota*, a flaky, layered slightly sweet bread made from white flour that is served with a vegetable korma, a stew of mixed vegetables in a coconut-based gravy, chicken curry, or mutton salna, a thin stew. *Burota* shops are open in the evening, and business picks up after 10:00 P.M. A unique Chennai dish is *kothu burota*, in which the bread is cut into bite-size pieces and sautéed with scrambled egg or minced chicken.

Bhajji, bondas, deep-fried lentil balls, and vada (a deep-fried doughnut-shaped bread made from lentils) are popular snacks (called tiffin by Chennai residents), especially in the evenings when they are eaten with coffee or tea. Every

neighborhood has its own humble bhajji stalls that are mainly vegetarian. But some parts of the city have stalls selling fried fish, including Chennai's famous Marina Beach, a favorite spot for promenades. Vendors also sell chicken or mutton biryani from huge pots at street corners and near bus stands. A unique feature of Chennai street-food life is the Burmese vendors selling *athouk*, a noodle salad, and *mohinga*, a soup made with plantain stem, onion, ginger, garlic, chili, turmeric, and rice flour.

Around closing time, many vendors sell hot soups, including healthy ones made from plantain stem and herbs, and sandwiches to people leaving their offices. A unique Chennai specialty is the *murukku* sandwich: slices of tomato, cucumber, and mint chutney are enclosed by two tiny crunchy *murukkus*—coiled crispy rounds made of rice flour that are a popular snack.

So popular is street food in Chennai that a game has developed based on the TV show *The Amazing Race* in which participants have to follow clues that take them to street-food hot spots in the city. Once there, they don't just sample the food; they have to figure out how to make it.

In the southwestern state of Kerala, such large cities as Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram have large street-food courts called *thattukada* that are open from dusk to dawn each night. They began as a cheaper alternative for the state's migrant workers but now are popular among rich and poor alike, especially students and families on weekend outings. Some serve snacks, others meals, including local specialties and dishes from other parts of India. A typical local dish is *porotta*, a flaky bread, that is served either with onions and a vegetable curry at vegetarian stalls or a chicken, lamb, or beef curry at nonvegetarian stalls. Another specialty is *appam*, a disk-shaped rice flour pancake with lacy edges often served with a coconut-based vegetable stew.

Hyderabad is one of the great culinary centers of the subcontinent, celebrated for both its haute cuisine and its roadside food stands, called *bandis*. A famous street-food area is the market near the Charminar, an ornate 16th-century building. Hyderabad cuisine combines elements of North Indian Muslim and south Indian vegetarian dishes and can be extremely hot thanks to the generous use of chilies. A famous Hyderabad specialty is *kacchi biryani*, a fragrant mixture of rice and pieces of beef or goat meat served with yogurt chutney, *mirchi ka salan*, green chilies in a spicy peanut-based gravy, and perhaps *bagare baingan*, small, round, roasted eggplants in a sesame seed and yogurt sauce.

During the month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, many people break their fast with biryani and *haleem*, a thick paste-like stew made of pounded wheat and meat and served sprinkled with crispy fried onions. Other vendors sell such traditional South Indian dishes as *idlis*, *dosas*, and *sambar* as well as the ubiquitous chaat and *jalebis*.

*Chitradeepa Anatharam and Colleen Taylor Sen*

## Eastern India

Kolkata, the sprawling capital of the state of West Bengal, as Calcutta, the former capital of the British Raj, has long attracted people from all over India, and its street-food scene incorporates dishes from every region. Famous street-food areas include Lord Sinha Road, the AC Market, and Carnac Street. The city's once large Chinese population dating back to the early 1800s has declined with emigration, but Kolkata still has India's only Chinatown, Tangra, where street vendors sell a local version of Chinese food. The immigrants spiced the bland Cantonese sauces with sliced chilies and hot red-colored sauces, creating such unique dishes as chicken sweet corn soup, chow mien, chili chicken, and Manchurian cauliflower and chicken. In the process, they created a very popular hybrid cuisine that is today served in Indian–Chinese restaurants all over the subcontinent and in North American cities with large Indian populations.

A local Kolkata specialty that is popular all over India is the kathi/kati roll, invented in the 1930s at a restaurant called Nizam's. The original version was made by roasting pieces of meat on skewers, then sautéing them with onions and red chilies, and finally wrapping the meat in a paratha with various chutneys and spices. Today kati rolls can contain vegetables, egg, chicken, or potatoes. They are wrapped in wax paper and eaten on the go. Another local specialty is *masala moori* or *jhal moori*, puffed rice mixed with mustard oil, boiled potatoes, minced onion, green chilies, and chickpeas and garnished with sliced coconut.

A uniquely Bengali dish is kabiraj cutlet, filets of chicken, mutton, or fish coated with egg and fried to form a delicate lacy coating. (The word *kabiraj* is probably an Indianization of the word “coverage”). Mughlai paratha, a paratha sautéed with a spicy egg (or sometimes ground meat) filling, is popular at festivals.

*Ghugni* is a very popular evening snack in Eastern India and is made by simmering chickpeas or yellow peas and potatoes with spice and tomatoes in water until a fairly thick gravy forms. It is served with puffed rice or bread.

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You'll find many interesting short films about Indian street food on YouTube. An excellent film that gives an overview of some of the street foods described in this entry is

a student project [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzGI\\_fBV9fs&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CzGI_fBV9fs&feature=related), See also A la Cart! Food in the Streets of India, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WzMpi9z zlc&feature=watch-now-button&wide=1>

## Indonesia

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The Republic of Indonesia, an archipelago comprising more than 17,500 islands, is the world's fourth most populous country with more than 238 million people who belong to hundreds of linguistic and religious groups. Around 60 percent of the population live on the island of Java, including more than 10 million in the capital Jakarta alone. While the majority of the population (86%) are Sunni Muslim, there are large communities of Christians (9% of the population) and Hindus (3%) concentrated on the island of Bali. Indonesia has been a center of trade for thousands of years. Indian, Chinese, Arabs (who brought Islam), Portuguese, Spanish, British, and Dutch all had outposts in the region, which was known as the Spice Islands. Indonesia was a Dutch colony for three and a half centuries until it won its independence in 1945.

Indonesia stands on both sides of the equator with south Asia to the north and Australia on the south. The nation's flora and fauna reflect both neighboring continents, and the country is the world's second greatest region for biodiversity. Much of the country is covered in forests, home to numbers of species that range from orangutans to tigers. The climate is warm the year-round with only one rainy and one dry season. The climate and landscape are conducive to Indonesia's staple crops, the foods of everyday life: rice, cassava, and sweet potato. Rice is so important that the dish known best around the world is *rijsttafel*, literally "rice table." Actually this is a Dutch colonial dish, but it does have Indonesian ingredients, especially rice.

International influences are reflected in its street food, which is one of the most vibrant and varied in the world. Each region has its own distinct dishes, and there are dozens of versions of the major street foods, reflecting local and regional ingredients, techniques, and customs. In such large cities as the capital Jakarta, Surabaya, Bandung, and Semarang, vendors offer dishes from all over the country, but in smaller cities, they usually specialize in the local cuisine. This entry will focus mainly on the street food of Jakarta. Many of the dishes (e.g., satay, samba) are popular in other countries in South East Asia, which gives rise to international disputes over their true origins!

A typical Indonesian street-food cart is called a *pedagang kaki lima*, which means five feet—perhaps from the five-foot-wide footpaths between urban buildings. Many vendors have their own typical call or song that announces their presence as they drive through residential neighborhoods or station themselves on a busy street. A *pikulan* is a walking restaurant in which the cook carries his cooking equipment on a bamboo pole slung over his shoulders, but these are disappearing with modernization.

*Warungs* are small semipermanent stalls made of wood and bamboo with a roof, a bench for customers to sit on, and a counter where the proprietors sell soft drinks, snacks, and simple dishes, such as fried rice (*nasi goreng*) or noodles (*mie goreng*). They often stay open until the early hours of the morning. Customers eat at a single warung or move from warung to warung, sampling different wares. Food stalls often give their patrons a bowl of tap water with a slice of lime with which they wash their hands before and after eating.

## Major Street Foods

### Soups

One of the most ubiquitous Indonesian street foods is *soto*, a soup made of broth, meat, and vegetables. Every region has its own version that reflects different kinds of meat, spices, the addition of noodles or rice, the kind of broth, and so on. Typical spices used in this and other Indonesian dishes are shallots, garlic, galangal, ginger, coriander, salt, candlenut, and pepper. The most common meats are chicken, beef, and water buffalo. Because of Islamic prohibitions against pork, it is rarely used in Indonesia except in Bali with its Hindu population. The *soto* broth can be clear, yellow-colored, or white if it is based on milk or coconut milk. Standard accompaniments include compressed squares of sticky rice, stewed quail or chicken eggs, grilled giblets or tripe, *krutuk* (shrimp crackers), fried tofu or tempeh, *sambal* (several kinds of spicy sauce, made with chilies), fried shallot, fried coconut, and lime juice.

Another popular soup is *mie bakso*, noodle soup with meatballs (*bakso*), vegetables, and tofu. The meatballs are usually made from beef mixed with a little tapioca flour, although chicken, fish, or shrimp can also be used. Other ingredients that can be added to the spicy broth are shredded chicken, chicken feet, *siomay* (dumplings), and fried wontons. Fried shallots and celery are sprinkled on top. Customers add *sambal* or sweet soy sauce to taste.

Typical Jakarta soups are *soto betawi*, beef and beef offal in a coconut milk broth, and *sup buntut*, an oxtail soup served with steamed rice.

### Dumplings

A Chinese contribution to Indonesian cuisine, a *siomay* (also spelled *siumay*) is a steamed fish dumpling traditionally made with *tenggiri*, or ground horse mackerel mixed with vegetables and steamed in a wonton skin. It is served with steamed cabbage or potatoes, eggs, and tofu. The *siomay* are cut into small pieces and served with peanut sauce or a sweet-and-sour spicy sauce. Horse mackerel is also used in *batagor*, dumplings that are fried until they are crispy. The two items are generally sold by the same vendor.

## Fritters

A specialty of Palembang, the capital of South Sumatra, *pempek* are popular throughout Indonesia as well as Malaysia and Australia. These deep-fried fritters are made from ground fish and tapioca with a boiled egg in the middle and served with yellow noodles and a dark rich sweet-and-sour sauce. *Gorgengan* are made by frying vegetables, fruits, tofu, and tempeh coated in batter and deep-fried, and served with fresh green chilies on the side. Plantains deep-fried in a batter (*pisang goreng*) are sold throughout Indonesia.

## Sate/Satay

Although Thailand and Malaysia lay claim to the invention of satay, most likely it originated in Java as a variation of Indian and Middle Eastern kebabs. From here, it spread throughout Southeast Asia and, in the 19th century, was taken by Malay immigrants to South Africa, where it was called *sosatie*. Pieces or slices of chicken, goat, mutton, beef, fish, or tofu are marinated in a mixture of soy sauce and various spices, threaded onto skewers made from the ribs of coconut palm leaves or bamboo, and grilled over a wood or charcoal fire. *Satay* is generally served with *lontong*, compressed rice cakes cooked in banana leaves, and a spicy peanut sauce.

## Fruits

Indonesian markets are teeming with fruits, including such native tropical fruits as mangosteen, jackfruit, durian, banana, breadfruit, and rambutan as well as foreign” fruits, such as strawberry, melons, apple, and dragonfruit. Fruits are sold and eaten fresh, squeezed into juices, made into desserts or savory snacks, fried, or preserved. *Pisang goreng* is a popular snack made by deep-frying banana slices in a rice flour batter. *Pisang goreng* is one of several names for the dish depending on the region, and it served in varieties of ways, sometimes sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon and even with cheese.

## Nasi Goreng (Fried Rice)

The Indonesian version of Chinese fried rice can be eaten any time of the day and is a favorite breakfast dish, made with leftovers from the previous night’s dinner. It is a mixture of precooked rice fried in oil and various vegetables that is flavored with garlic, pepper, tomato ketchup, *sambal*, sweet soy sauce, and sometimes shrimp paste, fish sauce, or wine. The most popular version, *nasi goreng ayam*, is made with chicken and sweet soy sauce. Other ingredients are chicken gizzard and liver; beef, goat, prawns, and other seafood, salted fish, sausage, vegetables, even pineapple. *Nasi goreng* is garnished with fried shallots, crispy krupuk, sour vegetable



pickles (*acar*), *sambal*, fried eggs, or shredded omelet. It is often sold together with *bamkie goreng*, noodles with meatballs.

### Noodles (*Mi/Mie*)

*Bak mie* are wheat-based noodles that are boiled, topped with chopped chicken meat, seasoned with soy sauce, and served with Chinese cabbage, wonton, and *bakso* (meatball). The soup is served in a separate bowl. Sometimes *bak mie* are served with a thick sauce or stir fried with vegetables, sweet soy sauce, meat, egg, or other ingredients. In another version, *ifu mie*, the noodles are first deep-fried. In Aceh province, goat meat or seafood is topped with a spicy curry-like soup to make a popular street food called *aceh mie*. In a South Sumatran version called *mie celor*, the noodles are boiled in a broth made from dried shrimp, simmered with coconut milk, and topped with bean sprouts, boiled eggs, and fried shallots.

### Gado Gado (Cooked Vegetable Salad)

A very popular lunch dish, *gado gado*, is a cooked vegetable salad served in a sweet hot peanut sauce and garnished with eggs, cucumbers, and onions. The vegetables can include cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, beans, and bean sprouts.



Indonesian food carts featuring noodle dishes in Kota, Jakarta, Indonesia. (Erik De Graaf/Dreamstime.com)

## Minor Street Foods

### *Krupuk*

These crispy deep-fried crackers that look like potato chips are eaten as a snack or an accompaniment to a meal. They are made by mixing a starch, usually tapioca flour but sometimes leftover rice, with water and other ingredients that add flavor, especially prawns. The mixture is rolled out, steamed, sliced, and sun-dried; once dry, the crackers are deep-fried in oil. A popular variation is *emping* made from the slightly bitter seeds of the *belinjo* tree.

### **Sambal**

This chili-based sauce is a standard condiment throughout South East Asia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and even the Netherlands. Its main ingredient is chili peppers, which range from mild to extremely hot. Traditionally, the chilies were crushed in a mortar and pestle with other ingredients, including fresh shallots, garlic, onions, basil, and other ingredients, to make a paste called *bumbu*. Indonesia has as many as 300 varieties of *sambal*, which include such ingredients as sour tamarind, garlic, sweet soy sauce, lime, fermented durian, anchovies, palm sugar, and tomatoes.

### *Bubur Ayam*

*Bubur ayam* is a popular breakfast dish, sold by vendors strolling through residential areas in the morning. The dish descends from Chinese chicken congee and is composed of rice placed in a bowl, topped with shredded chicken and various condiments, such as fried shallot, celery, preserved vegetables, fried soybeans, salty and sweet soy sauce, and *krupuk*. *Sambal* may be served on the side. It is also served at major international fast-food outlets, such as McDonald's.

### **Presidential Feast**

U.S. President Barack Obama, who lived in Indonesia for four years as a child, was deeply moved when his favorite boyhood foods were served at a state dinner hosted by the Indonesian president in November 2010. He especially enjoyed several common street foods that were served at the dinner: *bakso*, or meatballs; *nasi goreng*,

fried rice; *emping*, a puffy fried cracker made from the fruit of the Belinjo tree; and *krupuk*, a crunchy shrimp cracker. One of his teachers said that as a child, Obama's nickname was "krupuk" because he loved the crackers so much. "Semuanya enak," the president said at the end of the banquet. "Everything is delicious!"

## ***Murtabak***

Possibly originating in the Middle East or India, this stuffed pan-fried pastry is universally popular in Indonesia and Malaysia. There are two versions: sweet and savory. In the savory version, the dough is folded over cooked minced meat (often lamb or beef), mixed with onions, eggs, and herbs to form a six-inch-square pastry that is sautéed on an iron griddle and handed to the customer. It is often served with pickled cucumber and a sweet-and-sour sauce. The sweet *murtabak* is brushed with butter while cooking and sprinkled with sugar and sometimes crushed peanuts. There is also a delicious chocolate *murtabak*.

## **Beverages and Desserts**

The most popular Indonesian beverages are coffee and tea, especially jasmine and green tea. Sweet beverages made from coconut milk or coconut sugar are popular in Java. Many drinks that are made with ice also serve as desserts. For example, *cendol*, a mixture of coconut milk, a little jelly-like noodles made from rice flour (the green color comes from pandan leaves), shaved ice, and palm sugar, is sold everywhere in Indonesian cities.

## ***Tempe/Tempeh***

An important dietary source of protein in Indonesia is such soy-based products as *tahu* (tofu), *kecap* (made from fermented soy beans), and *tempe*. *Tempe*, which was likely invented on Java in the 18th century, is uniquely Indonesian. It is made by boiling soybeans, dehulling them, boiling them again, adding a fermentation starter, and incubating the mixture 24–36 hours at 88°F. This process binds the soybeans into a firm spongy rectangular cake. *Tempeh* may also be made from other kinds of beans, wheat, or a mixture of beans and whole grains. It is sold in the market wrapped in banana leaves.

*Tempe* can be prepared by cutting it into small pieces, soaking it in a salty sauce, and then frying it to a golden brown to make *tempeh goreng*, an ubiquitous street-food dish. It can be eaten by itself as a snack with a peanut sauce, added to a stew, sautéed with vegetables, wrapped in banana leaves, and steamed or grilled. Deep-fried *tempeh*, with or without a batter, is a popular street snack.

Another fermented product is *oncom*, a specialty of West Java, made from the by-products from the production of tofu, peanut or coconut presscake, or cassava tailings.

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## **Further Reading**

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## Iran

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Iran is situated between the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf and covers 636,000 square miles. Largely mountainous and hilly in the north, the country gradually gives way to arid lowlands, a large desert in its center, and finally more lush, tropical climates at its southern border in the Persian Gulf. In the north, the area around the inland Caspian Sea is verdant and cooler.

Iran shares borders with Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the former Soviet bloc countries of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkmenistan. At its largest, early Iran, or the Persian Empire, encompassed all of those nations within its environs. As a result, the cooking styles throughout the nation have been influenced by those who lived in the larger empire. Later, the Greek conquest of Iran brought foodstuffs including stuffed items such as grape leaves, while skewered marinated meats like *souvlaki* are thought to represent Persian influence on the Greeks.

Throughout this period and earlier, the Silk Road brought spices and goods from India and China into Iran. Through both trade and conquest, Iran influenced the cuisine of northern India. At its height in the Mughal dynasty, which lasted from the mid-1500s to the early 1700s, northern India demonstrated an artistry of food in the Persian style including prodigious use of lamb, elaborately layered rice dishes, and savory preparations that featured fruits, the use of saffron, and warm aromatic spices such as cinnamon. Today, Iranian food can best be described as most similar to northern Indian cuisine without the use of spicy peppers.

The political regime in Iran was a constitutional monarchy from the beginning of the 20th century until 1979 when, following a revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran was declared. Under the previous regime, a significant effort was made to move the country toward the West and Western values and standards. After the revolution, a strict adherence to Islamic traditions resulted in laws requiring complete observance of codes of conduct covering all aspects of life, including private and public gatherings. Consequently, in the absence of many innocent pleasures taken for granted elsewhere in the world, the attention of Iranians has turned to food: all manner of restaurant, takeaway or fast food, including street food.

In the case of such a vast country with such diversity of climate, the variety of food offered on the streets differs from the north to the south, east, and west. Not unlike other countries and perhaps because of the usual migration from the four corners to the capital, a rich selection from all around the country is available and very much cherished in the capital city, Tehran.

Street food in Iran used to be mainly fresh seasonal fruit, herbs, and vegetables. In the past, small quantities were brought in from the countryside on donkeys or

handcarts and sold on the street. Tasting the newly ripened fruit is still considered to promote health and bring good luck, quite apart from its nutritional value. People's appetite in early spring for sour under-ripe fruit countered the effects of the heavy, hearty, and usually greasy food of the winter. With the onset of autumn, the taste for richer food returns.

Today this is true of the cooked snacks and meals prepared and offered for sale on the street. In the cold months of winter, a craving for hot food is prevalent. Steaming sweet beetroot, cooked broad beans, and char-grilled corn on the cob are among the favorites. More recently, sweet corn a la Mexican, beef sausages, baked potatoes, and hard-boiled eggs have been added to the winter fare.

Starting in the 1950s, an increased awareness of food hygiene led to a certain suspicion of the traditional street-food peddlers. The government under Mohammad Reza Shah (king from 1941 to 1979) tried to impose licensing and some basic standards of food safety on their operation but with little effect.

The undeclared and unregulated nature of selling food on the streets in Iran is and has always had a particular attraction for the unemployed or those seeking to augment their salary. As economic circumstances continue to deteriorate, more and more people resort to ways of earning cash, including setting up a stall in the street to sell edible tidbits.

A conservative estimate based on firsthand interviews with street sellers puts the return on their money at 20–25 percent. Given that there is no tax, very little overhead, and no duties or license fees to be paid, it is quite an attractive business proposition. Very little skill is required, and the hours of business are such that it can be easily combined with another full-time job if necessary. Most of the cleaning and preparation of the food is done at home by female members of the family, and the ingredients are cheap and plentiful.

Nowadays, there seems to be a revival of the appetite for street food, and a profusion of new products are on offer. The main worry readily expressed by street vendors in Iran is the fear of police or municipality inspectors who stage regular raids in the areas where they operate to confiscate their equipment and chase them away. The sellers, however, are always one step ahead. Following are examples of some of their tactics:

- Some operate from the back of converted vans. These are equipped with storage boxes, work surfaces, and cooking facilities. The van is normally backed up against the pavement and obscured from the road by other parked cars. They normally cover out-of-town parks, popular mountain paths, and industrial zones.
- Working late at night or very early in the morning to catch late revelers or workers at the start of their day is another way to escape the long arm of the law. For the former, they target amusement parks or tourist attractions. They take their positions around 9 or 10 o'clock at night and work till midnight or

just after. Car parks or streets around factories and car assembly plants are among the favorite locations for those catering for the workers. They start between three and four o'clock in the morning to coincide with the start of the early shifts and finish around seven o'clock.

- Choosing equipment that allows a quick and easy getaway is another solution. Street vendors operating in and around the bazaar either carry their wares or operate from a clandestine central point from which they deliver plates of food to customers. Some cook on small charcoal braziers.
- Shop front stalls preparing and selling snacks and takeaway food as well as businesses located indoors are also plentiful. As part of a shop, they are minimally regulated and are not likely to be chased away by the authorities. If not cooked snacks, their wares usually consist of small prepacked bags of seasonal fruit, nuts, or dried fruit.

Special emphasis is placed on the preparation of the produce. That is, fruit and herbs are washed, peeled, seasoned where appropriate, and presented ready to eat. Where cooking is required, the ingredients are prepared beforehand as much as possible. For example, meat is cleaned, washed, and marinated, offal trimmed and cut to size, and beetroot washed and parboiled, so that they are ready to be cooked on portable stoves mounted on wheels to allow last-minute preparation. The setup is usually lit by a source of light, a primus stove, a battery-driven electrical device, or an electric bulb fed from a car battery. More often than not, an attempt is made to decorate the stall with colorful ribbons or artificial flowers.

Such an operation is generally a one-man show with the vendor singing the merits of his fare at the top of his voice to attract buyers. Since there is no scope for publicity or any kind of formal marketing activity to boost sales, a good reputation for fresh well-prepared food spread by word of mouth is essential for guaranteeing new and returning customers.

## Street Food in Religious Rituals

At specific times of the year, coinciding with religious festivals or days of mourning, food is distributed to passersby in the streets. This is free, subsidized by donations and organized through the local mosque. Initially intended for the poor families in the district, nowadays it is handed out to anyone who accepts it. Traditionally, the most popular dish served is *aash*, a thick vegetable-based broth cooked in beef stock with rice and pulses to thicken it. Another favorite for these occasions, *Qeymeh Polo*, is rice cooked with diced lamb or beef, split peas, and spices, especially turmeric. The meaty sauce is cooked separately and then mixed with parboiled rice steamed gently over low heat.

Food is prepared in the mosque or in private houses, but the final stages of cooking are usually done on the street corner near the mosque. It is brought out in large pots and placed on gas rings to finish off cooking and keep warm, and handed out in plastic containers, on paper plates, or wrapped in large pieces of flatbread. On such occasions, families also offer food or dessert (mainly saffron rice pudding, *sholeh Zard*, or a sweet *halva*) to ensure good health for their children and loved ones. This kind of offering is also prepared in the house and taken to poor districts of the town to be distributed.

### Major Street Foods

There is a tradition of treating yourself to an early (four or five o'clock in the morning) breakfast after a night out or in anticipation of a day of hard work in cold weather. Typically, the meal consists of either of a hearty broth made from the feet, head, and tripe of lamb cooked slowly overnight with onions and garlic (*kaleh pacheh*), or a slightly sweet porridge made out of wheat and lamb cooked together, pounded well then simmered over a low heat, and stirred continuously for several hours (*haleem*). Both are cooked in a specialist shop—*kaleh pazi* for the former and *haleem pazi* for the latter. *Kaleh pazis* usually have a few tables and chairs for those who would like to eat in, but most clients prefer to take the food home. It is eaten with freshly baked flatbread (*sangak*) and pickles. *Haleem pazis* do not offer seating facilities, and *haleem* is bought and taken home to eat with fresh bread, a generous sprinkling of cinnamon and a knob of butter.



A nut and sweet stand near the central bazaar in Isfahan, Iran. Nuts and fruits are important ingredients in many Iranian dishes and as snacks. (AP Photo)

Kebabs are an established favorite all over the country. A great variety of meat and offal is used for this purpose.

*Kebab-e Jegar* and *Del va Qolveh* (liver, heart, and kidney kebabs) are prepared by washing and trimming calves' liver, heart, and kidneys, cutting them into strips, and stringing them separately on short flat skewers. A daily visit to the local abattoir in the early hour of the morning ensures the freshness of supplies. The skewers are lined up on the side ready to be grilled as orders come in. The appetizing smell of liver over a charcoal fire is enough to lure people from several streets away.

*Kebab-e Koobideh* (mincemeat kebab) are made by kneading minced lamb with ground onions to obtain a pale color and sticky consistency that allows the meat to stick to the skewers and withstand grilling without separating from the metal. Although a simple dish, there is skill and patience involved in preparing the meat.

*Joojeh kebab* (chicken kebab) consists of pieces of chicken marinated in lemon juice and/or saffron and then skewered in advance to be grilled on demand. *Joojeh Kebab* is offered on or off the bone and in a choice of flavors.

*Mahi kebab* (fish kebab) used to be a regional variation found in the towns and villages along the Caspian Sea. However, it is no longer fashionable and not as readily available. Small sardine-like fish were gutted cleaned and skewered whole to be grilled on charcoal braziers.

*Kebab-e Gonjeshk* (sparrow kebab) is another largely forgotten regional specialty from the southern cities of Iran. The birds were plucked, gutted, and cleaned before being loaded 10 at a time on a skewer made from sturdier twigs of a local tree. The two ends of the twig were bound together to make a ring. They were sold either raw to be cooked at home, or grilled to a turn on the street to be eaten on the go.

*Bahtiyeh* (rice pudding) and *fereni* are specialties of southern Iran, especially Khuzestan Province, that are also seldom seen now. *Fereni* is rice pudding made with rice powder. The ingredient that sets these dishes apart from others is buffalo milk. The result is far creamier with a strong and distinctive taste. These were cooked at home by the women the night before and sold from the pot on the street corners the next day.

Cooked or grilled vegetables are generally sold during the cold weather. *Laboo* (steamed beetroot) is widely sold all over the country during the winter months. Beets are partly boiled at home beforehand. A handcart is converted to house a heat source (gas or paraffin) underneath. On top, a large deep tray is placed on which the beets are piled high. To ensure that the *laboo* is sweet enough, extra syrup is added to the juice to baste the beets while they continue to cook.

Freshly picked cobs of corn are peeled and grilled on a bed of red hot coals to make a dish called *balal*. Once they are cooked to the taste of the buyer, they are doused in a bucket of salted water, shaken to get rid of the excess water, and handed to the eager customers.



*Baghala pokhteh* (cooked broad beans/fava beans) are sold in the spring and autumn. In late spring, they are cooked in their pods in a little salted water and sold to the passersby. Extra salt and powdered Persian hogweed (*Golpar*) can be added to taste. In the autumn, dried broad beans are soaked overnight and boiled in water and cooked to perfection.

*Shahrazad Ghorashian*

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## Ireland

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Ireland has a long tradition of street food and markets, but nowadays, due to stringent adoption of European food safety laws, most food eaten out of one's hand in the open air is sold from permanent food stalls in shops or food courts. Itinerant street vendors selling snack foods such as burgers and hot dogs exist, but they ply their trade mostly at fairs, music festivals, sporting events, or at night near dance clubs and late night bars. In recent years, gourmet street food by Michelin-starred chefs has become a feature of some prestigious music festivals such as the Electric Picnic. Farmers' markets have become increasingly popular and numerous in the last decade. Despite a proliferation of multinational fast-food outlets, the most popular street foods are sandwiches and potato chips during the daytime and food from traditional chippers (fish and chip shops) later in the day and into the night. Turkish döner kebabs became a popular street food in Irish cities from the 1980s, particularly after closing time in the Irish pubs. The thin strips of spit-roasted meat is served in pitta bread with shredded Dutch cabbage and topped with chili tomato-based sauce and garlic mayonnaise sauce.

The island of Ireland is the most westerly country in Europe. Called "The Emerald Island," Ireland has a temperate climate that allows grass to grow nearly all year-round and is renowned particularly for its beef, sheep, and dairy industries. Bounded by ocean and sea, fish is critical to the Irish diet, and Ireland was the first European country to adopt the potato as a staple crop in the late 16th century. The population of the island is about 5 million (1 million in Northern Ireland, a part of the United Kingdom). Catholic Christianity is the dominant religion although religious influence on diet such as eating fish on Friday has significantly declined in recent decades. Over the last 15 years, Ireland has become a truly multicultural society with the influx of immigrants from the Baltic States, Eastern Europe,

Africa, and Asia, many of whom work in the food business, particularly at hot food/sandwich counters and in the fast-food sector. Street food is eaten by all classes in Ireland but most frequently by the lower social classes.

The main sources of carbohydrates in Ireland are bread and potatoes although pasta, noodles, and rice have become increasingly popular. This dominance corresponds with the proliferation of sandwiches and chips within the Irish street-food culture. Prepared sandwiches are widely available, the most common being ham, chicken and stuffing, and the BLT (bacon, lettuce, and tomato). Hot food/sandwich counters have opened in most convenience stores and gas stations selling breakfast rolls in the morning (baguette filled with sausages, bacon, fried egg, and black pudding) and specializing in made-to-order rolls and sandwiches for the lunchtime business. One of the most popular lunchtime items is a chicken fillet baguette (a breaded chicken breast chopped and served in a baguette with mayonnaise and shredded iceberg lettuce). Potato wedges (plain or spicy) are another popular item from these hot food counters. Juice/smoothie bars also became popular sources of street food during the recent economic boom.

Street traders have been selling food in Irish cities for hundreds of years. Some of these from the 18th century have been captured in a series of drawings called Dublin Cries by the artist Hugh Douglas Hamilton. Food sold included oysters, fresh milk, apples, fish, hot peas, and herbs. The quintessential Dublin anthem “Molly Malone” is about a fishmonger who sold “cockles and mussels alive, alive oh.” Nowadays



Fresh produce market in Ballvaughn, Ireland. (Courtesy of Bruce Kraig)

there are fewer street dealers, as they are known, and their continued existence is partly due to the late parliamentarian Tony Gregory, who went to jail to defend the trading rights of these predominantly female dealers. The tradition continues in locations such as Moore Street and Meath Street in Dublin and in the English Market in Cork. These dealers sell mostly fruit, vegetables, and fish, rather than food to be eaten on the spot. Some sell reduced-priced chocolate bars (often seconds), a practice popular outside sporting occasions and music events.

In the last 10 years particularly, there has been a sharp increase in farmers' markets. These come in a number of categories: markets where the farmer or family member sells their product directly; markets where there is a mix of farmers and other itinerant food sellers who often sell imported products at a higher price with the illusion of it being locally sourced; and specific markets specializing in organic food. The good farmers' markets provide a direct link between the producer and consumer and are particularly popular with the growing number of artisan cheese makers, pork butchers, jam makers, and bakers. A popular street food sold at such markets is crepes, which can be sweet (sugar and lemon, or Nutella—a chocolate hazelnut spread) or savory (e.g., goat's cheese, rocket (arugula) and red pesto).

## Major Street Foods

### Sandwiches

Sandwiches still remain the most popular lunchtime food for the working public. Historically, the majority of workers and schoolchildren made their sandwiches at home. There were always shops that would make sandwiches to order, but pre-packed sandwiches were associated principally with railway catering. With growing economic success and increasing female participation in the workforce during the 1990s, prepacked sandwiches became the market leader in convenience street

### Spice Burgers

The spice burger is a unique Irish product made since the 1950s by Walsh Family Foods. The patented recipe is a blend of Irish beef, onions, cereals, herbs, and spices coated with a traditional outer crumb. The product has featured in the menus of Irish chippers for generations and is also sold in supermarkets. In June 2009, the company closed due to the financial crisis. There

was public outcry for the loss of this unique part of Irish culinary heritage. A "save our spice burger" campaign was started on Facebook and other social media outlets. The publicity stoked the interest of catering distributors and retailers to have placed sufficient orders with the company to justify a resumption of production, saving valued jobs in the Dublin factory.

food. The value of the combined deli and prepacked sandwich market in Ireland is worth half a billion euros annually. Ireland's largest sandwiches company Freshways has a quarter of the prepacked market. The made-to-order sandwich business also increased dramatically with sandwich counters appearing in most convenience stores. A number of sandwich bar chains opened, the most famous being O'Brien's Irish Sandwich Bars, which franchised its business globally. Sandwich bars also sell coffee, and specialist coffee shops also sell sandwiches. One of the leaders in specialty and gourmet sandwiches has been Marks & Spencer's supermarket chain, which has a number of outlets in Ireland. More than 900,000 sandwiches a week are purchased in Ireland today. Sandwiches are often eaten with a bag of Tayto crisps.

### **Traditional Irish Italian Chippers**

Chips, or French fries, are by far the most popular hot street food in Ireland. This niche business was set up by the Italian immigrant community, which began to arrive in Ireland around the 1880s. These Irish-Italian families who all come from the Val di Comino in southern Italy began in the food business, selling ice cream and fried sliced potatoes (known as chips). Their combination of fish and chips became known as a "One and One" in Dublin and among some denizens of Cork as "a bag of blocks and a swimmer." Giuseppe Cervi is credited with being the forerunner in these operations, opening his business in 1885 on Great Brunswick Street (now Pearse Street). In the early part of the 20th century, these Italian families ran ice-cream parlors, soda fountains, fried fish restaurants, and grills. A second wave of immigrants also from the Comino valley arrived after World War II, and chippers became more widespread particularly with the growth of suburban living. In recent years, the Irish Traditional Italian Chippers Association, which has around 200 participating members, have designated 25 May as the Irish National Fish and Chips Day. On this day, there are queues outside most chippers as fish and chips are sold at a special reduced price.

The most popular fish is cod (fresh and smoked), but ray is also very popular in Dublin. Both fish and chips are usually topped with salt and malt vinegar and served in paper bags. The combination of seasoning and steam from the closed bags produces a unique flavor and texture. Other classic chipper dishes include onion rings, batter burgers, battered sausage, and garlic mushrooms. Curry sauce and garlic mayonnaise have also become popular as condiments. Another peculiarly Irish takeaway food associated with chippers is the spice burger—a commercially produced blend of Irish beef, onions, cereals, herbs, and spices, coated in a traditional outer crumb, usually deep-fried (see sidebar). Many chippers such as those run by the Macari's and Borza families have diversified over time and also sell burgers, southern fried chicken, and sometimes döner kebabs and pizza. Dublin's most

## Tayto Crisps

One of the most popular snack foods in Ireland are crisps, which are commonly known as “Tayto’s.” Crisps are deep-fried wafer thin potato slices, known in the United States as potato chips. They are sold in sealed foil bags. The Tayto company began making their cheese- and onion-flavored crisps in 1954, and

the word *Tayto* has been synonymous with crisps in Ireland ever since. Salt and vinegar is the second most popular flavor. In recent years, Tayto has lost market share to companies such as King and Walkers, but Irish immigrants still yearn for a packet of Tayto crisps when they are away from home.

famous chipper is Leo Burdock’s in the historic center of the city and has a regular local and vibrant tourist trade.

## Ice Cream

Ireland has one of the highest per capita ice-cream consumption rates in the world. There are two main varieties of street consumed ice cream: ice pops/ice-cream bars and Mr. Whippy’s or freshly whipped ice-cream cones, which, with the addition of a chocolate flake, are known as “99’s.” Ice cream is widely sold all year-round, but whenever a particularly hot day arrives, ice-cream cabinets are often emptied by early afternoon of products such as choc ice, brunch, iceberger, fat frogs, and wibbly wobbly wonders. One of the most famous locations for Mr. Whippy’s is “Teddy’s” in Dún Laoghaire, which has been operating since the 1950s. The sound of certain music has excited children for decades as it signals the arrival of an ice-cream van in their neighborhood. These Mr. Whippy vans are still a regular part of Irish life.

## Specialized Street Food

Certain foods are associated with particular parts of Ireland. *Blaa* is a yeast bread roll that is found principally in Waterford. The selling of cooked periwinkles as a street food was widespread in the past but is now found only in Kilkee in County Clare, sold alongside *dillisk* (edible seaweed). *Drisheen* is a type of sausage made from sheep’s blood and sold nearly exclusively in Cork. Candy floss (cotton candy) is associated with traveling circuses, funfairs, and seaside resorts. Yellowman or yallaman is a type of Irish toffee, golden in color and brittle, sometimes known as honeycomb candy or sponge toffee. It is traditionally associated with the “Auld Lamma Fair” run on the last Monday and Tuesday of August in Ballycastle Co.

Antrim since 1600. The yellowman is broken into small chunks with a hammer and sold by street traders in small paper cones.

*Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire*

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## Israel

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The modern State of Israel was founded in 1948 along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Parts of it are identified with the biblical and rabbinic Land of Israel, Eretz Yisrael. Under Roman, Byzantine, and then Arab rule from late antiquity, the area became part of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century, and small Jewish communities were to be found in Jerusalem and other cities among the local Arabs. Modern Jewish immigration to Palestine from Europe began after pogroms in Europe in the late 19th century, with the creation of the Zionist movement. After the foundation of the State of Israel as the Jewish homeland in 1948, immigration increased to include Jews from many Arab countries and more recently from the countries of the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. The local food culture has been influenced by this complex historical picture.

Israel today has about 7.7 million inhabitants, of whom about 75 percent are Jews and about 20 percent Arabs. The rest comprise a number of small communities, such as Circassians and Samaritans. Jews from Eastern and Northern Europe are mostly known as Ashkenazim, while those from Spain and the southern and eastern Mediterranean are generally called Sephardim or Mizrahim (Oriental Jews). Ashkenazim and Sephardim are about equally divided in the present population, and there has been considerable intermarriage between the communities. The Israeli Palestinian Arabs are mostly Muslims, but there is a sizable minority of Druze and a number of Christian communities.

Many of the Zionist Jews who arrived in Palestine at the end of the 19th century, including the founders of the kibbutz (collective settlement) movement, rejected the traditional culture of European Jews, including the heavy Ashkenazi foods, and embraced the local Arab Mediterranean ingredients and some of the cuisine. The small local Jewish communities who had lived for a long time under Turkish rule,

### Influence of Religious Regulations on Street Food in Israel

A considerable part of Ashkenazi rejection of European Jewish culture included ideological secularization and rejection of the religious regulations about kosher food, especially on the kibbutzim. Sephardic immigrants tended to be more traditional, and since they influenced street food more, this tends to be kosher, even if not supervised by a rabbi. Muslim Arabs also do not eat pig, so that *basar lavan*, white meat (pig), is almost never sold on the street. Cooking methods tend to be in accord with the kosher rules too, so that meats are usually sold grilled rather than stewed, obviating the need for soaking

and salting. Meat and milk products are usually separated, also in accordance with the kosher rules. Some ingredients have been adapted to kosher rules—the *parev* (neutral, neither milk nor meat) *tehina* made of ground sesame seeds is used as a sauce for kebabs, instead of the milk yogurt more common in countries of the former Ottoman Empire. Until a court ruling overturned this, local bylaws all over the country prohibited the open sale of leavened products during the eight days of the Passover festival, so that, for example, pizzas are baked on a matzo (unleavened bread) base for the duration.

especially those in the Yishuv haYashan, the old Sephardi settlement in Jerusalem, were already using local ingredients in their *borekas* and *sambuseq*. The ultrareligious part of the Ashkenazi Jewish community tended to disapprove of eating food in the street, quoting the talmudic maxim, “he who eats in the street is like a dog.” The combination of all these factors has meant that street food in Israel today is almost always Sephardi or Arab, rather than Ashkenazi, and the iconic street food of Israel is the *felafel*.

Street food is eaten more by the young, the poor, and workers in industrial areas who cannot get home for lunch. It is eaten at kiosks, trailers, open-fronted shops especially bakeries, and market stalls; on the beach; and from supermarket trolleys and polystyrene boxes. Traditional groups such as elderly Europeans, old and middle-aged Arabs, and ultraorthodox Jews rarely eat on the street. This is now changing. Many young Arabs and Jews eat on the street at kiosks, and there are now stalls selling food for immediate consumption even in local village markets.

Types of foods derive from a number of sources, perhaps the strongest influence being the indigenous Palestinian Arab food. Each wave of immigrants have added their own favorites or adapted what they found: Israeli *felafel*, unlike Egyptian *felafel*, is made of chickpeas rather than fava beans. There is a two-way exchange of foods: just as Jewish Israelis have taken on Arab *felafel*, so the local Arabs have taken on *me'urav Yerushalmi* (Jerusalem mix), mixed grilled meats that they call simply “mix.” Both Jews and Arabs eat *shouwarma* and *borekas*. Bedouin and Druze women can be seen in many markets or in ad hoc tents making large *pittot*

(pita bread) for immediate consumption, swirling the dough on their hands and baking it on a curved metal saj, sprinkling it with za‘atar/douka (dried hyssop, soumac, and sesame seeds). The same Druze vendor makes and sells her pittot in the market of the Jewish town of Rosh Haayin on Fridays and in the market of the neighboring Arab village of Kfar Kassem on Saturdays. She also sells sambuseq, *labaneh* (yogurt cheese), *humus* (chickpea salad), cooked beans, olives, and stuffed vine leaves. These foods are popular with Jewish Israeli buyers as they are perceived as authentic and natural.

## Major Street Foods

### Breads and Stuffed Pockets

Almost all local dough is made with wheat flour. Perhaps the most common local bread is the indigenous pitta (pl. pittot), a small round soft pocket of leavened bread that can be conveniently filled. There is also a larger pitta, made by sticking rounds of thin dough to the side of the taboun, oven, which when crispy (Iraqi) or thick (Yemenite) can be torn up and eaten, dipped into *humus*, chickpea salad; or a softer, thinner version, known as a laffa, which can be wrapped around a filling. Tunisian Jews brought French baguettes for their “Tunisian sandwiches,” Moroccans brought frena, elongated flatbreads, sometimes dimpled, flavored with olive oil and ketzah (nigella seeds), and baked on hot pebbles. Ordinary pittot, often sold from the open front of the bakery, are also sometimes spread with olive oil and za‘atar, powdered hyssop; with tomato sauce with or without yellow cheese; and with chopped onions. Yemenite Jews brought a number of their own dough foods and breads: *salouf*, an elongated flatbread similar to Moroccan frena but made on a grill; *jahnoun*, a yeast and oil dough cooked as a roll and eaten chopped up with pulverized fresh tomato sauce; *kubaneh*, yeast dough with samneh, clarified butter, or margarine, baked slowly in



Seller of bread on Old Jerusalem street in Israel. (Pavel Bernshtam/Dreamstime.com)



special covered pans (originally a Sabbath food baked overnight in the oven); *malaweh*, fried flaky pastry; *lahouh*, fried batter with lots of yeast added, which leads to a sponge-like bread looking like a flat English muffin. *Lahouh* is eaten (especially in the market at Rosh Haayin, an originally Yemenite town) with a sauce made of fresh tomatoes with cilantro and *zhug*, a sharp relish, or *hilbeh*, spicy fenu-greek relish beaten to a froth.

The kosher rules forbid eating milk foods together with meat. Street vendors usually keep to this division and do not sell meat together with milk products. Cheese fillings are used for the wheat-flour baked version of the sambuseq. Sambuseq are found all over the Middle East, but the filling of the fried version, onions, and chickpeas, is typically Israeli.

*Sephardi*, *empanadas*, and *pastellim*, dough pockets with meat fillings, are also popular. In effect, there is often little difference between *borekas*, *sambuseq*, *empanada*, and *pastellim* as they are sold on the street, although home and gourmet versions can differ considerably.

*Qubeh*, called torpedoes after their shape, are made of meat, preferably lamb, with a casing of either bulgur or semolina. The most sophisticated Baghdadi versions have mashed potatoes or rice. They can be fried and eaten as finger food or cooked in soup like huge dumplings. There is now a *qubeh* bar in the Mahaneh Yehudah market in Jerusalem, which serves both *qubeh* soup as well as different versions of the fried kind: Iraqi, Kurdish, Syrian, and so on.

## Meats

Some of the meat foods sold on the street in Israel appear to date back to Turkish times to judge by their names: the local term for a charcoal barbeque is the Turkish *mangal*. Shouwarma refers to slivers of meat cut off with a long knife from larger pieces on a revolving vertical skewer, cooked by electric plates. This was originally lamb or mutton, which was substituted by turkey meat. When street vendors in the 1980s reverted to lamb, or at least lamb fat, its popularity soared. It is now sold all over the country, served wrapped in a laffa spread with humus or tehina with a choice of salads, pickles, and spicy hot or hotter sauces—*zhug* (Yemenite), *harissa* (Maghrebi), or *amba* (Iraqi)—and fried potato chips. Kebabs, minced meat with onions and parsley cooked on skewers, are likely be spiced with *baharat* (spices), a mixture of cardamom, black pepper, allspice, cinnamon, ginger, and nutmeg. *Shishlik*, cubed and spiced chicken, is also barbecued on skewers (*shipudim*) over hot coals. Another local favorite is *me'urav Yerushalmi*, Jerusalem mix, a mixed grill. The kibbutz communal dining room was probably the origin of the local conversion of the Austrian Wiener Schnitzel made of expensive veal beaten thin and fried in batter to the Israeli schnitzel made of much cheaper turkey or chicken breast. The batter is sometimes still eggs and flour, but more often the meat is dipped in flour

and breadcrumbs, the latter usually a commercial blend with orange coloring laced with monosodium glutamate. Schnitzel is a favorite children's food, sold on the street like other meats in a pitta or baguette with salad and pickles and chips, and plenty of tomato ketchup.

### ***Me'urav Yerushalmi***

*Me'urav Yerushalmi*, Jerusalem mix, is a mixed grill made of diced chicken together with kidneys, livers, hearts, and other offal, cooked straight on a heated metal plate. This is a kosher way to cook such meats without pre-salting and soaking. The meats are flavored with salt, pepper, and spices such as cumin, paprika, and baharat, and served with fried onions from a paper plate or in a pitta or laffa. The best *me'urav* is to be found along Agrippas Street in Jerusalem, near the Mahaneh Yehudah market.

### **Felafel**

It is symbolic of the tensions in this area of the Middle East that this popular food is claimed as *ours* by both Arabs and Jews. It is now sold everywhere and eaten by everyone, Arabs and Jews, old and young, religious and secular. The version of felafel popularized by the Yemenites uses chickpeas, coarsely ground and flavored with lemon, garlic, and cumin. The chickpea mix is deep-fried in little balls, which are then served in a pitta (or half pitta) with a choice of addition, but always with *salat katzutz* of diced tomatoes cucumbers, and so on, diluted with fresh cabbage when tomatoes are very expensive. To top off a felafel, there are sauces in large squeeze bottles, more or less refrigerated: pale cream-colored tehina, yellow amba (sour mango sauce), hot red harissa, or hot green zhug. Each city has its own favorite felafel stand—there are numerous “felafel kings,” and once Tel Aviv boasted a pair of “felafel queens.” In times of galloping inflation, parents have even been known to peg their children's pocket money to the price of half a felafel.

### ***Borekas***

Borekasim are made with phyllo dough or puff pastry, and often filled with cheese, usually a salty feta type or the slightly more acidic Bulgarian cheese, or the parev (neutral) potato, spinach, or mushrooms. There are also versions filled with minced meat. Traditionally, each *borekas* has a different shape—triangular, square, horse-shoe—to prevent people taking the cheese by mistake for a meat *borekas* or a parev one, which is allowed to be eaten together with meat. This custom dates back at least to 18th-century Istanbul. Borekasim are often sold together with brown long-cooked haminados eggs, in which case they are sliced in half horizontally, and the

roughly chopped eggs inserted between the two halves of this sandwich, sometimes with sliced pickled cucumber.

### **Sambuseq**

Sambuseq is usually made from a yeast dough cut into circles and folded over the filling. It can then be baked or fried. Baked sambuseq, with pinched edges forming a semicircular frill, have a variety of fillings, similar to *borekas*: cheese, spinach, and potatoes, and there is even a sweet cheese and raisin version. Fried sambuseq are typically filled with a bright yellow filling of onions and chopped chickpeas with turmeric, and the edges are pressed together with a fork. Sambuseq can also be made with *warka*, the thin flour and oil pastry used for the Moroccan cigar, a cigar-shaped roll of pastry stuffed with chopped meat and onions.

### **Salat Katzutz (Israeli-Palestinian Salad)**

Exceedingly finely diced tomatoes, cucumbers, and onions (and sometimes sweet peppers and chopped parsley), flavored with olive oil (hopefully), salt, pepper, and perhaps lemon juice, are the standard salad for filling pittot. Street-food stalls are judged on the freshness of this salad, and the size of the dice—the smaller the better, they say, just short of splitting the atom.

### **Sufganiyot**

In the autumn and winter, and especially on the eight-day festival of Hanukkah, *sufganiyot*, jelly doughnuts made of yeast dough, are deep-fried and sprinkled with confectioners' sugar, and sold hot for immediate consumption on the street and even in supermarkets. Every year there are new fashions for fillings: chocolate, halva (sweet sesame paste), and *dulce de leche*, but the simple red jam of uncertain origin remains the favorite. There is even a popular song: "Are you on a diet? No, I'm not on a diet, I'm on sufganiyot."

## **Other Street Foods**

### **Roasted Seeds and Nuts**

Israelis love to nibble nuts and roasted seeds, and sometimes hot chestnuts can be found roasted on braziers in the colder Jerusalem winter. Salted and roasted garinim, seeds, but especially black-and-white striped sunflower seeds, cream-colored pumpkin seeds, and watermelon seeds are eaten everywhere, on the street, at football matches, and even outside synagogues. One synagogue in Petah Tiqvah is even known locally as Heikhal ha-garinim, the Shrine of the Sunflower Seeds, as its courtyard is always full of husks. The progress of groups of youth through the

streets of the cities on a Saturday afternoon can be traced by the trails of husks. At least they are biodegradable. Eating garinim takes a certain degree of skill—you have to learn how to crack the seed into two between the front teeth without reducing it to splinters, so you can extract the seed from inside cleanly with the tongue. Garinim are part of the class of pitzuhim, things needing cracking, which includes peanuts, pistachios, cashews, and cracked and salted pecan nuts. They are sold in little bags from a grid of metal boxes, which also include different varieties of dried fruit: raisins, dates, figs, and so on.

## Sweets

Innumerable types of sweet buns, cakes, and patisserie are sold from kiosks, caravans, and open-fronted bakeries and, together with coffee or a bottled drink, make a popular snack at any time of day, or a quick breakfast eaten on the way to work or school.

Some of the dough-based foods already mentioned come in sweet versions as well: there is a sweet cheese-and-nut filling for the baked sambuseq, for example. The famous Mediterranean pastry baklava, dripping with honey or syrup, is usually sold from open-fronted bakeries or market stalls in large quantities to take home, for parties, and especially to break the fast at Ramadan. But they are so good that some people cannot resist the temptation to eat them on the spot, wrapped in a napkin to hopefully stop them from dripping. In the autumn and winter and especially on the eight-day festival of Hanukkah, *sufganiyot*, jelly doughnuts, and deep-fried and sprinkled with icing sugar, are sold hot on the street. Another Turkish-influenced food sold in little disposable cups especially in markets is *mallabi*, in its street version a very sweet pudding of corn flour or rice flour and maybe milk, flavored with rosewater, topped by bright pink raspberry syrup, chopped green pistachios, and brown roasted coconut.

## Drinks

The hot climate has always meant that drink is a prime need, particularly for travelers. Today there are many vendors of drinks everywhere: on the street, at bus, train, and petrol stations, at crossroads, in the markets, on the beach, and at every mass gathering. Everyone drinks on the street, even ultraorthodox Jews, except during the monthlong Muslim Ramadan fast and the occasional Jewish fasts. The markets still sell *limonada*, purportedly natural lemon juice horribly sweetened, but more probably adulterated with artificial lemon flavoring, with some grated lemon peel to make it taste more real. Once the small stands and market stalls all got electricity, *barad*, half-frozen slush in neon colors became common: purple for grape drink, orange and yellow for orange and lemon flavors, aimed at children. More recently, the yuppyizing trend has led to ubiquitous sales of *Eiskaffee*, sweet milky coffee

slush for adults. Some street juice stalls squeeze fresh orange and pomegranate juice. Some of the more old-fashioned markets, such as Ramle, still sell Turkish leben, a yogurt drink.

*Susan Weingarten*

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## Italy

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Italy has a long and rich culinary tradition, characterized by strong regional differences. Each region, and even each town within the same region, has unique preparations and ingredients, determined by geography, topography, and Italy's turbulent history. One unique feature of Italian culinary traditions is their continuity. Many of the foods Italians consume on a daily basis date back several centuries. One of the longest-lived culinary traditions of Italy is the tradition of street food, food prepared by street vendors and consumed on the street, often using only one's hands to eat.

Italian street foods are deeply rooted in tradition, history, and geography, reflecting both regional gastronomic traditions and the numerous conquests and invasions that have left a mark on the territory. Since Roman times, the lower classes have lived out a portion on their lives in the streets and alleys, celebrating, mourning, and sharing their experiences with their neighbors. The dwellings in crowded ancient Rome did not have kitchens or stoves that could be used to cook food, so the population relied on street vendors and cookshops where meat or fish could be fried, bought, and enjoyed on the run. The attractions at the Roman Coliseum went hand in hand with the consumption of large quantities of foods cooked right there and consumed by the crowds who came to watch the spectacles. On the streets of imperial Rome, hawkers sold a variety of items, including *panis ac perna*, grape must sandwiches stuffed with ham cooked in the water of dried figs.

In the Middle Ages, a period of severe food shortages and widespread famine, the church helped establish central markets within the walls of cities partly as gathering places for the population. These markets housed food stalls with a variety

of delicacies. The church also established feast days, which were both an attempt to keep the population's connection to their religion and an opportunity for occasional displays of excess. For much of the population plagued by famine, this was the only relief from hunger. Food was the center of the saint's day's celebrations. It was prepared by food vendors and enjoyed communally, most often outdoors. A whole animal might be roasted for such feasts, and each part of the animal was consumed, so nothing was wasted.

In some areas, street-food vendors provided an important service in poor neighborhoods well into the 20th century. Street vendors in Naples provided the poor residents of this crowded city with sustenance as most urban dwellings had no kitchen. Pizza, arancini, potato croquettes, fried fish, and vegetables and even spaghetti were consumed in the street, simply wrapped in a piece of paper. To this day, Naples has one of the liveliest street-food cultures of any Italian city.

The globalization of food and the proliferation of fast-food restaurants led to a change in eating habits around the world, including Italy. But Italy has managed to preserve many of its centuries-long culinary traditions, including those related to street food. There are dozens of Italian recipes for foods to be consumed rapidly in the street and most rely on centuries-old traditions. Pizza, panzerotti, focaccia, arancini, and lampredotto are still sold by street vendors and small kiosks around the country and consumed by locals and visitors alike.

A number of initiatives have been aimed at protecting traditional street foods and promoting the culinary traditions related to them. Streetfood a nonprofit association, promotes awareness of traditional street foods and the people who sell them. It strives to provide a "healthful and sustainable alternative to globalization" and clearly communicate the importance of culinary traditions, many of which are on the verge of extinction. There are also events dedicated to the valorization of street food such as the *International Street Food Festival*, held in *Cesena*, and the street-food area within *Turin's Salone del Gusto*, in association with *Slow Food*.

## Major Street Foods

### Pizza

The most famous Italian street food, which has spread around the world, is pizza, which was first created in Naples and consumed folded over as a snack or sandwich. By the early 18th century, a custom had developed in Naples of dressing a disk of baked bread dough with tomato sauce and sometimes cheese. While it is not certain who created the first pizza, it was Raffaele Esposito who brought pizza to stardom. Esposito had inherited a pizzeria from his father-in-law, who in turn had bought it from Pietro Colicchio, who in 1780 opened the first pizzeria in Naples called *Pietro . . . e basta così* (Peter . . . and that's enough). In June 1889, Raffaele



Romans and faithful pilgrims eat free pieces of pizza in Rome's Via della Conciliazione, near St. Peter's Square, as part of the Jubilee of the Pizza Makers. (AP Photo/Marco Ravagli)

Esposito was called on to prepare the pizza for King Umberto I and his wife, the first Queen of Italy, Margherita of Savoy, during their visit to Naples.

Raffaele Esposito decided to offer three different pizzas. One was seasoned only with olive oil and cheese, one was garnished with small fish, and, finally, Esposito's own invention was topped with mozzarella, tomato, and a few leaves of fresh basil to resemble the colors of the Italian flag. The queen liked Esposito's tricolored pizza and complimented Raffaele who, in the queen's honor, called it Pizza Margherita. Pizza Margherita became an immediate sensation in Naples and gradually spread to other parts of Italy and eventually to the United States when Neapolitan immigrants brought it with them to the East Coast.

Over time, Italian immigrants spread pizza around the world, and today this street food remains one of the most popular dishes around the globe and the standard bearer of Italian gastronomy.

## **Focaccia**

The ancestor of pizza, focaccia, in essence a yeasted bread dough topped with oil, herbs, and other ingredients, has a much longer history. The Etruscans, Greeks, and Romans used to bake flatbread, to be consumed both plain and flavored. This

flatbread was made and cooked by street-food vendors as most households in ancient times did not have kitchens or ovens. Naples is the birthplace of pizza, but various types of focaccia had been prepared throughout the Italian peninsula since ancient times and show strong regional differences. To this day, they are made by bakeries, sometimes specialized focaccia bakeries or stands, and consumed at any time during the day as a snack or light meal.

**Focaccia Genovese:** This focaccia from the port city of Genoa is half an inch thick, seasoned with olive oil, sea salt, and occasionally onion, ingredients in which the region abounds.

**Focaccia di Reco:** This unique Ligurian specialty was traditionally produced in coastal villages. It is unique in that it consists of two thin layers of dough between which is an equally thin layer of hot, melted *crescenza* cheese.

**Focaccia di Bari:** This focaccia from the port of Bari in Puglia, in the south of Italy, ranges from 1/4" to 1/2" in thickness. This southern specialty is made with durum wheat flour and extra virgin olive oil and garnished with fresh tomatoes, olives, and occasionally capers, all ingredients typical of Puglia.

**Sfincione:** Typical of the city of Palermo, this flatbread is topped with tomato sauce, Sicilian cheese, and onions.

**Focaccia Messinese:** At 1/4" to 1/2" thick, this focaccia from the Sicilian port of Messina is cooked in rectangular or square metal pans and topped with vegetables, tomato, cheese, and anchovies.

A variety of other flatbreads are consumed in various parts of Italy. The *tigelle* in Emilia-Romagna are thin, yeasted flatbread cooked between heated tiles. They can be opened and stuffed with meat and cheese. To the east, in Romagna, the most famous traditional street food is *piadina*, a flat circular piece of dough cooked on boiling hot rings and stuffed with a variety of toppings including the cheeses and cured meats Romagna is famous for.

## Arancini

A common street food of Sicily, arancini are balls made of rice (or risotto) and stuffed with meat sauce and sometimes mozzarella. They are coated in beaten eggs and breadcrumbs and deep-fried in olive oil. The soft filling contrasts in texture with the crisp shell.

Arancini probably date back to the 10th century. During the Arab domination of the island, it was customary to place a large plate of saffron rice with meat and vegetables in the center of a banquet table. Guests were encouraged to help themselves by taking a handful of rice. Therefore, originally, the Sicilian rice ball was simply a ball of rice with some seasonings and pieces of meat.

Later, the court of Frederick II came up with the idea of breading and frying the rice balls so the emperor could carry them on hunting trips. The balls were easy to



transport, nonperishable, and tasty. Thus, arancini were likely created to meet the need of those looking to consume a meal in a hurry, which made them the perfect street food.

*Suppli*, a variation on arancini, are usually cylindrical in shape. The meat or tomato sauce is incorporated into the rice. The *suppli* are then stuffed with a piece of mozzarella, which melts when they are cooked.

### **Tripe (*Lampredotto*)**

A traditional street food of Florence, *lampredotto* is boiled tripe sold from tripe kiosks throughout the city. The tripe is slowly cooked in a vegetable broth and seasoned with herbs. It is served in a bread roll and can be topped with a green or spicy sauce. Locals often ask for a *panino bagnato*, in which a portion of the bread roll is dipped in the flavorful cooking juices before being served. *Lampredotto* is a favorite with locals and has survived many changes in tastes and fashion over the centuries.

### **Seadas (or Sebadas)**

This traditional Sardinian street food is now considered a snack, but in the past, it was often considered an entire meal. A square of thin dough prepared with flour and lard, but no yeast is wrapped around a piece of pecorino cheese and deep-fried. The seadas are then drizzled with honey and enjoyed hot.

### **Fritto**

Fried foods have been popular in Italy as street food for centuries and are one of the highlights of Italian gastronomy. A variety of ingredients are coated or dipped in various ways (in batter, egg wash and breadcrumbs, or simply flour) and then deep-fried in either olive oil or lard. Special food kiosks, called, *friggitorie*, were used to fry and sell a variety of foods. What is fried and how it is fried depend on the region. The ingredients can vary from vegetables, fish, and offal to such sweet delicacies as zeppole.

*Fritto misto* is a combination of bits of meat, seafood, and vegetables dipped in batter and fried in olive oil. In Venice, *fritolin*, fried small fish served in a paper cone to be eaten in the street, was very popular in the 18th century, but it is on the brink of extinction today. This street food was also popular in Rome in the 18th and 19th centuries, but it is much less common today. In Naples, fried fish and vegetables remain a popular street food sold in paper cones and enjoyed as a snack any time of the day.

A variety of fried foods based on dough remain popular as street food in Italy. Some are prepared for specific feasts. Others are everyday foods created centuries

ago and still consumed as snacks or light meals. One such street food is *gnocco fritto*, a specialty of Emilia. The yeasted dough is cut thin and deep-fried in lard. In the past, it was served to busy workers as a mid-morning snack with salami and Lambrusco to keep them going through the day. It was quick, hot, and filling.

### **Olive *All'ascolana***

A street food from the town of Ascoli Piceno in Le Marche region of Italy, this delicacy is now also served as a popular bar food in the region. The large green olives are pitted and filled with a soft meat filling. After being dipped in batter, the olives are fried and sold by street vendors or in bars in paper cones. They are a delicacy specific to the region around Ascoli Piceno, but have recently spread throughout Italy.

*Viktorija Todorovska*

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# J

## Jamaica

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A popular tourist destination, Jamaica is a small island nation with a population of 3 million. The indigenous people, the Taino, were wiped out, but their culinary legacy lives on in such ingredients as cassava, corn, sweet potatoes, callaloo (a green leafy vegetable), superhot Scotch bonnet peppers (a key ingredient in Jamaican sauces), allspice (pimento), and papaya. Later African slaves working on the sugar plantations brought yams, pigeon peas, and pumpkin. After the abolition of slavery in 1833, the British brought in Indian and Chinese workers as indentured laborers, later joined by Lebanese traders. These ethnic groups contributed to Jamaica's rich culinary traditions that reflect the country's motto "Out of many, one people."

Street vendors are everywhere on the island. Some sell fresh fruits, fruit juices, sugarcane juice, or coconut juice (as in the popular Jamaican-based song, "Coconuts have iron—they'll make you strong as a lion"); others cook dishes to order. Breakfast and lunch are the busiest times for vendors who sell complete meals called "Box Food." The most popular lunch boxes have fried, baked, or curried chicken with white rice or oxtail stew with peas. Some vendors have been organized into parks to serve tourists, including the Harbour View Roundabout near the airport in the capital, Kingston.

Jamaican street-food vendors are colorful characters, and some invent jingles about their products. An example, "Chips, chips, banana chips. Give the girls nice hips." Many are housewives who sell baked goods, chutneys, sauces, and other items in order to supplement their income.

### Major Street Foods

#### Jerk

The most famous Jamaican street food is jerk (derived from the Taino word *charqui*, or dried meat), which is the local version of barbecue (another word of indigenous origin). Meat (traditionally chicken or pork but today fish, beef, even tofu) is rubbed with a very hot spice mixture and grilled over charcoal in a steel drum. The seasoning contains allspice and Scotch bonnet peppers and other spices that are the vendor's secret ingredients.

Jerk may be served with a flatbread called bammy made from cassava flour; Johnny cakes, fried wheat dumplings; or with Festival, a fried hot dog-shaped piece of sweetened dough. A standard accompaniment is a piquant sauce made of garlic, ginger, pimento berries, Scotch bonnet, and cinnamon. Another popular dish is pan chicken: chicken marinated in onions, garlic, Scotch bonnet, and spices that is grilled slowly over an open flame, then chopped up, doused with hot pepper sauce, and served with hard dough bread.

### Fried Fish/Fry Fish

“Fried fish” means large whole fish such as parrot and snapper that are eaten using utensils; “fry fish” are little fish eaten whole with one’s fingers. The fish are wrapped in foil or paper and served with Festival or Bammy and the usual hot sauce.

### Patty

A relative of the empanada, the Jamaican patty is a small semicircular savory pastry with a spicy meat, fish, seafood, or vegetable filling. The flaky crust is tinted golden yellow from turmeric or an egg yolk. The colored dot on the crust indicates the filling: no dot means ground beef, red dot chicken, and a green dot a vegetable filling. Jamaican immigrants have taken patties to the United Kingdom, Toronto, and New York.

### Ackee and Saltfish

Known as Jamaica’s national dish, this is a popular street breakfast food. The ackee fruit (*Blighia sapida*; sometimes called soapberry) was brought in the 18th century by Captain Bligh of Mutiny on the Bounty fame. The dish is made by sautéing salt cod with boiled ackee, onions, Scotch bonnet peppers, tomatoes, and spices. Side dishes include Bammy, Festival, fried plantain, boiled green bananas, or breadfruit

#### Bammy

*Bammy*, the cassava flatbread that accompanies fried fish and jerk, comes from a bread eaten by island’s original inhabitants, the Taino. Traditionally, it was made by grating and draining cassava, beating it in a mortar, and sifting it to make a fine flour that was mixed with water and baked on an iron pan over an open fire to make a thin bread similar

to tortillas. Because it was so labor intensive, *bammy* had virtually disappeared until the early 1990s when the Jamaican government developed modern production techniques and trained a women’s cooperative to produce the bread. Today it is again an important part of Jamaican street, restaurant, and home cuisine.

(brought from Tahiti by the same Captain Bligh). Wedges of breadfruit are another popular street-food dish that are fried or roasted.

## Soup

Cauldrons of boiling soup are a common sight on Jamaican streets. A popular hang-over remedy is fish tea prepared by gutting small fish, boiling them with garlic and thyme, and crushing and straining them to make a boneless broth into which finely cut yams, carrots, and other vegetables are added. No two fish teas are alike, since each vendor has his own special recipe.

Cow cod soup is prepared from the genitalia of a bull simmered in a broth with vegetables, dumplings, vinegar, garlic, pepper, pimento, and thyme. This dish is popular with men because of its alleged aphrodisiac properties. A cousin is “man-nish water,” a spicy soup made from goats’ heads and penises, garlic, scallions, chayote, Scotch Bonnet peppers, and sometimes white rum.

## Seafood

Land crabs are a popular street food. Live crabs are cleaned, then thrown into a pot of boiling water flavored with scallion, thyme, black pepper, butter, and lots of Scotch bonnet pepper. The cooked crabs are placed in a basket so that customers can choose their own and take home in a plastic bag.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Japan

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Japan has a fairly homogeneous culture; residents of Korean and Chinese origin form less than 1 percent of the population. Throughout the country, there are many local customs and, because of the wide range of climatic conditions, many different agricultural products. Nevertheless, when it comes to street food, there is a remarkable congruity throughout the country. In the past, the coastal areas had greater access to fresh fish than the extensive mountainous areas, which had vegetables unavailable to coastal dwellers. However, with modern transport, this difference is largely a thing of the past, and the more popular items of street food are much the same throughout this nation of 128 million people.

There are numerous occasions in Japanese life when food is eaten out-of-doors, although even when food is prepared in the street, it is considered very bad manners to eat it in the street. It is just “not done.” If seating under some kind of roof or

shelter is not immediately available, then people will take such food to an appropriate place, such as a picnic area, or even back home. Even eating at a bus stop or railway station platform while waiting for a bus or train is not considered acceptable. A paper delivered at the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery (*Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1991*, p.118) describes an incident where a newly arrived foreign teacher in Japan was roundly criticized by one of his students for eating a piece of chocolate while waiting for a bus to set out on a pleasure trip! The informality and fun of the situation were no excuse.

There are, however, many occasions when food may be eaten out-of-doors, notably picnics on certain socially specified occasions and at religious or cultural festivals. Picnics include Cherry Blossom viewing in spring and enjoying maple and ginkgo leaves in autumn. Festivals include visits to Buddhist temple and Shinto shrine visits in midsummer and at New Year's; university, school and city festivals; and rice-planting and harvest festivals.

Street food packed in boxes is also eaten on trains. The outcome of the chocolate incident related earlier was that the moment the teacher and his student were riding on the bus (a moving vehicle), it was alright to eat the chocolate.

Eating in the street is one thing, but preparing and selling food in the street is quite another. Buying food from street stalls is extremely popular in Japan, but more often than not, a covered area with seats will be provided nearby, or the food will be taken elsewhere to be eaten, such as home or a picnic location.

The first festival of the year is the New Year festival, commencing on New Year's Eve and running for the first three days of the new year. This is very much a family celebration at home, but Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple visits are a must. At this time, stalls are set up in the approaches to the shrines, selling *amazake*, a hot, sweet alcoholic beverage flavored with ginger.

Spring arrives and the cherry trees come into bloom. *Hanami* (cherry blossom viewings) offers the excuse for great fun, often with song and dance, under the cherry trees in parks. *Yozakura* (night viewing of cherry blossom) is a favorite activity. Although many groups bring their own home-made food, restaurants, department stores, and street stalls sell special *hanami bento* (boxed foods) containing rice and a variety of delicious tidbits. Summer brings opportunities of picnics, in the country or by the sea, and again food from home or the ubiquitous *bento*, often bought at a convenience store, provides the eats.

Many towns and cities have summer festivals at which the *yukata* (informal summer kimono) is worn, and on these occasions, the streets and shopping malls will be lined with stalls selling all kinds of street food, preferably to be eaten under an awning of some kind with seats, benches, boxes, or upturned cans to sit on.

With autumn comes *momijigari* (maple leaf viewing), the food being the autumn equivalent of the *hanami* of spring, though there will be no night viewing as it may

already be a bit too chilly to eat out-of-doors, and there will not be so much jollity with song and dance, since the autumn mood is lower than that of spring.

On November 3, Culture Day, schools, colleges, and universities all celebrate the day with stalls set up on campus staffed by the students. Here not only will all the usual street foods be sold from stalls, but also there will often be quite innovative items based on foreign food, such as the French Dog, a hot dog on a stick fried in batter.

Other occasions for eating *bento* are train journeys. Every major railway station has several different styles and prices, as well as its own local specialty. Finally, at any time of the year, any night of the week, in cities and large towns, stalls will be set up near railway stations for cheap and convivial eating and drinking. Seating, screened off from public view, will be provided for six or so people. The emphasis is on drinking, with all its conviviality, and street food will be served as an accompaniment. Often men on their way home after a night's drinking will drop in to such a stall (*yomise*), for *o-chazuke*, a bowl of rice sprinkled with flakes of salted salmon or some such topping and/or pickles, and flooded with tea. It is supposed to be sobering, and a fitting end to a night's drinking.

## Major Street Foods

Most of the street foods are prepared on the spot by grilling or pan frying. Some, usually foreign ones such as corn on the cob, hot dogs, and frankfurters, are boiled, while *gyoza* (Chinese) are steamed and then fried. This is inconvenient, since it is not easy to provide stalls with a ready supply of water. The source of heat is bottled gas. There is always a ready supply of disposable chopsticks to avoid eating with one's fingers.

The most traditional street foods are *noshi ika*, flattened slices of dried squid, often basted with soy sauce, and skewered on bamboo sticks; and *tempura*, food deep-fried in batter that was introduced by the Portuguese in the 16th century. Large shrimp is the favorite tempura ingredient. Also popular are squid; slices of sweet potato; green peppers; *shishito*, a very mild, green chili pepper; eggplant; pumpkin; onion; *shiitake* mushrooms; and lotus root. Stalls for *tempura* are nowadays not as popular as they used to be.

## Sushi

By the early 19th century, *nigiri* (or *edomae*) sushi had become the street food *par excellence*. *Nigiri* means "squeezed" and refers to the way this kind of sushi is made by squeezing a lump of rice in the palm of the hand. The rice is topped with wasabi and a slice of fish. This kind of sushi originated in Edo, now Tokyo, hence the expression *edomae*. *Nigiri sushi* is a true finger food, and it is a mistake to try



to eat it with chopsticks in polite company, even when sitting at a table. Good sushi is extremely expensive, and only the most meager sushi, with cheap toppings such as squid, octopus, shrimp, or omelet, is sold as street food.

*Wasabi* is an essential between the rice and the topping (*neta*) and is an expensive ingredient. This has led to the extensive use of fake wasabi, especially abroad, when sushi is served to unsuspecting non-Japanese. This fake wasabi is prepared from powdered horseradish colored green and is much more pungent than true wasabi.

When eating *nigiri sushi*, it is usual to dip the topping side in soy sauce, which is almost impossible to do when using chopsticks. On the other hand, it needs both hands to manage soy sauce in one hand and sushi in the other. There is nothing for it but to sit down at a table, pick up the sushi with the fingers, and dip the top corner into the soy sauce.

## ***Bento***

*Bento* means both a box-shaped container for carrying food and the food itself. The boxes come in all shapes and sizes and can be very elaborately decorated. For everyday use, it is a simple lidded box, usually with separate compartments for rice and tasty morsels. In the *hinomaru* (name of the Japanese flag) *bento*, the box is filled with rice and decorated with a single, salt pickled *umeboshi* (red Japanese apricot). Children take their packed lunch to school in a bento box. Adults take their lunch from home to workplace in a bento box, and those traveling by train either take one from home or buy one at the station, where there is usually a wide choice. On the platform of Kyoto station, they even sell one containing the vegetarian food eaten by the Buddhist priests, Kyoto being a major center of Buddhist temples. Traditionally, one eats *bento* during the interval at *noh* and kabuki, traditional styles of Japanese theater.

Normally the rice in *bento* is cold, but in recent years, enterprising convenience stores have added hot rice to the box at the time of purchase. This is called *hoka hoka bento*. The variety of foods to go with the rice is endless. Pickles are a must, and there might be a shrimp, pieces of fish, or even oysters, fried with a coating of breadcrumbs, some pieces of chicken, meatballs, pieces of tempura, all sorts of fish preparations such as *kamaboko* and *chikuwa*. The choice is endless.

## ***Okonomiyaki***

*Okonomi* means “your choice,” and *okonomiyaki* is a pancake filled with the items requested by the customer. Shredded cabbage is a must, and there is usually a choice of thinly sliced beef or pork, squid, shrimp, or octopus. When ready, the pancake is

brushed with a thick version of Worcester sauce and sprinkled with various savory toppings.

### ***Takoyaki***

Octopus (*tako*) is the main ingredient in these balls of batter cooked in a cast-iron mold and served with thick sauce and a sprinkling of chopped seaweed.

### ***Ramen***

The consumption of *ramen*, Chinese-style wheat noodles, is restricted to seating inside the stall, since they are served in a bowl of hot soup made from pork or chicken bones, flavored with salt, soy sauce or bean paste (miso) and with various such additions as bamboo shoots, spinach, spring onion, grilled pork, and slices of boiled fish paste. The stalls are most often in the vicinity of a railway station and are very popular with people returning home from work.

Other popular noodles are *soba* (buckwheat or groat noodles), usually served on a bamboo mat, and *udon* (soft wheat noodles) that are served in a broth.

### ***Yakisoba***

These noodles are made of regular wheat (not buckwheat), steamed and served with such vegetables as Chinese cabbage, bamboo shoots, mushrooms, and carrot, with the addition of shrimp, squid, and pork. The ingredients are fried together and served with a rich sauce.



A ramen shop in Tokyo, Japan. Ramen noodles are the most popular fast food in Japan and are now sold world-wide. (Angela Ostafichuk/Dreamstime.com)

## ***Oden***

A medley of popular snack ingredients, *oden* is prepared in a seaweed (*kombu* kelp) stock. Because it takes time for the ingredients to reach their peak of flavor, the stall must have a stock bath big enough for all the ingredients to simmer in for some hours. Typical ingredients are *daikon* (long white radish); tofu; *chikuwa* (sausage shaped fish paste stiffened with starch and egg white and grilled on a skewer); peeled potato; hard-boiled egg; octopus tentacles; *gammodoki* (tofu mixed with various chopped vegetables, formed into balls and deep-fried); and *konnyaku* (blocks of fairly tasteless jelly made from devil's tongue (konjac root) paste, enjoyed for its chewy texture). The customer's choice is served on a plate with the hottest English-style mustard imaginable and a pair of disposable chopsticks.

## ***Taiyaki***

A great favorite with children, *taiyaki* is a sweet snack cooked in an iron mold shaped like a sea bream (*tai*). *Yaki* refers to the direct application of heat, as in grilling or baking. The mold is lined with batter, placed over heat to set the batter, filled with *azuki* bean paste, and finished off over heat. Innumerable Japanese confections have a filling of bean paste, of which the Japanese are very fond.

## ***Ishiyaki-imo***

Roasted sweet potatoes (*satsuma imo*) are also much loved by children. Children coming home from school love to see the *ishiyaki-imo* vendor waiting for their custom. *Ishiyaki* means cooked over hot stones, in this case pebbles. The vendor plies the streets in his van and has the sweet potatoes roasting over hot pebbles in a suitable container. The customer chooses a potato, pays for it according to weight, and takes it home wrapped in newspaper for a mid-afternoon snack.

## ***Kuri***

*Kuri* are chestnuts, greatly enjoyed in winter when roasted over hot pebbles. The vendor sets himself up with an empty kerosene can filled with pebbles and heated from underneath, with the chestnuts roasting on top, in some busy place such as a shopping street or railway station. They are bought in a paper cone and cannot be eaten with chopsticks, so the fingers must be used.

## ***Kakigori***

Shaved ice, *kakigori*, is a traditional summer treat. The ice is shaved in a machine, placed in a bowl, and covered with bright syrup of strawberry, melon, or lemon, or with a sweet red kidney bean jam.

## Watagashi

*Wata* means “cotton wool,” and *gashi* (*kashi*) means confection, so *watagashi* is the widely familiar spun sugar on a stick, much loved by children as candy floss in Britain and cotton candy in the United States.

*Richard Hosking*

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## Jordan

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The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a young country in the Middle East, is bordered by Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. At 34,277 square miles, Jordan is slightly smaller than Indiana. Its population of more than 6 million is 98 percent Arab. Jordanians are approximately 92 percent Sunni Muslim, 6 percent Christian, and 2 percent other. About 75 percent of the population is urban. Bedouins who retain their traditionally nomadic lifestyle make up close to 10 percent of the population.

Most of Jordan is rocky desert, with a rainy season only in the west. Water is a rare and precious commodity. Only about 3 percent of the land is arable, and less than 3 percent of the population works in agriculture. The primary agricultural products are citrus, tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, sheep, poultry, stone fruits, strawberries, and dairy.

Jordanian cuisine, essentially Arabian, has much in common with food in other Middle Eastern countries. Olives and olive oil are consumed at every meal. Eggplant, bulgur (cracked wheat, also often called *burghul*), tomatoes, yogurt, mint tea, garlic, and unleavened bread are staples. Among the country’s Arab neighbors, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine have had the strongest influence. However, the nomadic Bedouins have contributed to the cuisine of Jordan, and the influence of the Ottoman Empire can be seen in such foods as baklava and gyros-style meats (called *shawarma* in Jordan, where it is made as often with chicken as with lamb).

Because Jordan is a Muslim country, there is no pork. Most main-course dishes include chicken or lamb. Fish is generally seen only in the south, nearer the



A vendor sells foul (cooked fava beans) in a market in Amman, Jordan. Foul is one of the most popular street foods across the Middle East and North Africa. (AP Photo/Mohammad Abu Ghosh)

port of Aqaba. Goat is eaten on occasion, though most goats are kept for milk. Eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, fava beans, and chickpeas are other important protein sources.

The bread one seen most often in Jordan, as throughout the Arab world, is the round, unleavened loaves called *khoubiz*. It is a little thicker than pita, but is similar, including having the pocket that makes it ideal for sandwiches. The second kind of bread, seen somewhat less often, is the soft, flexible Bedouin sheet bread called *shrak*, which is about 13 inches in diameter and 1/4-inch thick.

Tahini, a paste made from sesame seeds, appears at almost every meal, including breakfast. Yogurt is used plain and in sauces, or is drained to create the soft, creamy yogurt-cheese called *labneh*.

Rice may appear as a bed for roasted meats, in a pilaf, or as part of the stuffing for cabbage rolls. Bulgur is featured in many recipes, including the popular bulgur-and-parsley salad called *tabouleh*. It is also a key ingredient in *kibbeh*, which combines the bulgur with finely ground lamb.

Coriander, cumin, cinnamon, and black pepper are common spices, but the most distinctive regional spice is sumac (also spelled *sumaq*; this is *not* the poison sumac of North America). It has a deep rusty-red color and a pleasantly sour taste. Sumac is a key ingredient in the spice mix *za'atar*, a blend of sumac, toasted sesame seeds, salt, thyme, oregano, and marjoram. (The word *za'atar* can also refer simply to the herb thyme, but it more commonly refers to the spice blend, in which thyme is always a featured ingredient.)

Flatleaf parsley is used so heavily that it actually constitutes a vegetable or salad green. It is a major ingredient in such salads as fatush and often dominates the bulgur in *tabouleh*. Mint appears almost as commonly, in salads and other recipes, and is also almost always used in tea.

Lebanese influence is most responsible for Jordan's splendid pastries. Delicate, layered, honey-drenched sweets and rich cookies laden with pistachios, walnuts, and/or sesame seeds line the shelves of pastry shops.

## Major Street Foods

Wandering the streets of Jordan's cities and towns, one finds a wide range of food options: dates and apricots; lamb kebabs or *shawarma* stuffed into flatbread; baked goods, from savory bread rings to rich pastries and cookies.

Probably the two most common items amid the offerings found on the street are falafel and manakeesh. Manakeesh, sometimes referred to as Arab pizza, is a flatbread cooked with toppings. Olive oil and *za'atar* is the most popular topping, but toppings can include cheese, minced lamb, or chicken. Manakeesh is usually eaten folded in half and is often served with pickles and yogurt. More common still are the falafel makers, who sell from shops that open out onto the street. You can watch your falafel being made, so you know it's fresh. Falafel makers have a small, metal device into which they pack the uncooked falafel mixture and then eject it into the hot oil to fry. That makes it possible for every falafel to be just about identical in size and helps speed up the process for a busy vendor.

*Cynthia Clampitt*

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# L

## Lebanon

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The Republic of Lebanon is bordered by the Mediterranean on the west, Syria on the north and east, and Israel to the south. Its location at the crossroads of the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East has created a culture of enormous religious and ethnic diversity. Today around 60 percent of the population are Muslims and 40 percent are Christians of many different denominations.

The earliest inhabitants were the Phoenicians, maritime traders who flourished for nearly 2,500 years in the centuries BCE. Later conquerors included the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, and the Ottoman Empire. When the latter collapsed following World War I, France acquired a mandate over the area that today constitutes modern Lebanon. The country gained its independence in 1943 and became known as the “Switzerland of the East” because of its financial power and gorgeous scenery, which attracted tourists. Between 1975 and 1990, the country was rent by civil war.

The climate is Mediterranean: mild to cool wet winter and hot dry summers. The country is famous for its cedar, pine, and olive trees and the abundance and variety of its agricultural produce.

People eat on the street in Lebanon for two reasons: for entertainment when they take a stroll by the sea or in the mountains; or out of necessity. Street vendors cater to people working in the souks who cannot go home for their meal, to travelers, or to shoppers who need to stop for a meal, a drink, or simply a snack.

Today there is a strong established tradition that people can eat almost as well on the street as at home or in restaurants. The Lebanese do not regard street food as junk food as Westerners often do but as a fast alternative to restaurants or a convenient substitute for home cooking, albeit with less fine ingredients and sometimes questionable hygiene. Street food is also considered a treat, especially during religious feasts or festivals or in the case of particular specialties that are not easily replicated at home, such as *shawarma*.

Food is available on the street from breakfast onward, although not usually for dinner when people go home or to restaurants. The food changes as the day progresses. Very early in the morning is the time for *sahlab* (a hot milk drink thickened with dried powdered orchid tubers) if there is a need for something sweet and warming or *hommus* or *ful medammes* (mushy fava beans) for something savory and filling. Another classic breakfast choice is *manaqish*, a flatbread topped with



a mixture of *za'tar* (dried thyme, sumac, and sesame seeds) and olive oil that can be eaten plain or wrapped around olives, cucumbers, tomatoes, *labneh*, and fresh mint leaves.

For adventurous souls, there is *nifa* or lambs' heads roasted in the same ovens as *manaqish*. For mid-morning snacks, the choice includes *fatayer* (savory pastries filled with greens or cheese), nuts and seeds, or *ka'k* (sesame galettes), which are available throughout the day. Lunch is normally sandwiches, the most common being *shawarma* and falafel. However, in Tripoli, north of Beirut, one can choose from a variety of fish sandwiches along the port or a *moghrabbiyeh* (large couscous grains) sandwich in the souks. During the afternoon and early evening, vendors sell roasted nuts and seeds (pumpkin, watermelon, or sunflower), grilled ears of corn cooked over a charcoal grill fitted onto the vendor's cart, or such sweets as *qatayef* (fried pancakes filled with cream or walnuts) or *nammourah* (syrupy sponge cake). Drinks range from seasonal freshly pressed juices to sugary sodas and syrups.

There are two ways to eat on the street. One is to buy something from a vendor's ambulant cart or a hole-in-the-wall stall and eat it on the go; the other is to sit at a communal or individual table to enjoy whatever specialty the café/restaurant serves, including grilled meats or *fatteh* (a composite dish made up of toasted bread, chickpeas, yoghurt, and toasted pine nuts), which is another sustaining breakfast dish.

The government does not appear to have a policy on street food either by checking hygiene or by regulating the number and location of vendors. Despite this, most vendors' carts, stalls, or small cafes are fairly clean, and some are spotless. The vendors are fairly spaced out throughout cities, towns, or villages so that you always find something to eat without having too many street vendors in one place.

## Major Street Foods

### Ka'k

Possibly the most iconic of Lebanon's street food, these sesame seed galettes that look like handbags are peddled everywhere but are particularly associated with the corniche in Beirut. They are normally strung on wooden racks fitted onto the vendor's bicycle, which has a work surface on which the vendor lays the galette to slit open the fat part and sprinkle a little *za'tar* inside before handing it to the customer.

### Shawarma

*Shawarma* is a very large, fat kebab, once made only with lamb but now with chicken as well. The meat is sliced into wide thin pieces, marinated overnight, and

threaded onto a long skewer. Slices of fat are placed between every few layers; if chicken is used, the skin is included. The skewer is fixed in front of a vertical grill and left to rotate over a moderate heat for 2–3 hours, or until the meat is cooked through. During cooking, the fat melts down the whole length of the “kebab,” basting it and keeping it moist. Even before the meat is cooked all the way through, the *shawarma* seller starts slicing the outer cooked layer to order and piles the thin slivers of meat onto pita bread. He garnishes the meat with sliced tomatoes, onion, pickles, herbs, and tahini sauce if the meat is lamb or garlic sauce if it is chicken, then rolls the bread tightly over the filling. He half-wraps the sandwich in paper and hands it to the customer to eat standing by the stall or on the go.

### Roasted Peanuts and Seeds

These are piled on wooden carts and scooped into paper cones usually made with used newspapers. Lupin seeds are an ancient pulse that has been part of the Mediterranean diet since the third century BCE. The seeds need to be soaked for a few days before they become edible. They are salted, and the thick opaque skin slipped off before eating the seeds.

### Seasonal Fruit and Juices

Depending on the season, you can buy a bag of green almonds in the spring, a punnet of mulberries in the summer, or prickly pears that the vendor peels for the



A street vendor's cart containing Kaak, a raised flatbread like pita. Kaak is the great street food of Lebanon. (Eliane Haykal/Dreamstime.com)

customer. In the autumn, thirst can be quenched by freshly squeezed pomegranate juice served at the many fresh fruit juice stands.

## Roasted Corn

Corn is another classic street food although it seems to be less in evidence these days than before the civil war. The vendor wedges the grilled ears along the side of his charcoal grill to keep them warm and sprinkles the ear of corn with salt and lays it on a piece of paper to hand to the customer.

## Sweets

Sweets are very much part of the street-food scene, both on a daily basis and during religious occasions, especially Ramadan. During this month when Muslims fast, sweetmakers set up stalls outside their shops to make extra *qatayef* (pancakes) or *kellage*, a wafer-like pastry that is soaked in milk, wrapped around a thick semolina custard, and either served plain or fried and dipped in syrup. Another popular sweet is candy floss (cotton candy), both the pink airy kind swirled around a stick and the more substantial *barbe à papa*, which you grab with your fingers to eat. Another messy sweet is *nammûrah*, a sticky sponge cake dripping in syrup that drips even if you hold it with the paper provided by the vendor.

## Manaqish

There are two types of the flatbread called *manaqish bil-za'tar*: one is baked in the oven and the other is cooked on the *saj* (a kind of inverted wok placed over charcoal or a gas fire), the latter being thinner and slightly more crisp. The topping, *za'tar*, is a savory mixture made with powdered dried thyme, sumac, and raw or toasted sesame seeds. Some bakeries also make *manaqish* with *kishk* (a mixture of burghul and strained yogurt, which is fermented, dried, and rubbed to produce a very fine powder), halloumi cheese, sliced thinly and spread over the dough, or *qawarma* (lamb confit that Lebanese mountain people use in winter when fresh meat is scarce).

## Fatayer

The *fatayer* sold on the street are much larger than the home-made ones. The shape remains the same, a closed triangle made with the same dough as pita bread, which is filled with spinach, Swiss chard, or curd cheese.

## Thursday or Ramadan Bread

This is a stamped bread sold during Ramadan from wooden carts wheeled through the streets of Tripoli and other predominantly Muslim towns. They also sell other breads, including one filled with dates. Thursday bread is also sold in bakeries. It

looks similar to the Holy communion bread of Greek Orthodox churches, *Qorban*, though the stamped pattern is different. The Orthodox pattern is made of Greek letters within a cross, while the Muslim is made of round geometric designs. The breads are also different. The Muslim one is basically a thick pita bread flavored with *mahlab* (the kernel of a wild cherry that adds an intriguing fragrant taste to some breads and cookies), then brushed with water toward the end of baking and sprinkled with nigella seeds. The Christian bread is more like a Western-style spongy bread flavored with orange blossom water. It is reserved for church use while Muslims eat theirs throughout Ramadan, mainly for *sûhûr* (the last meal taken before the fast begins again at sunrise) with cheese or *labneh* (strained yogurt) and olives.

## Sandwiches

An excellent place to buy fish on the street is the mina (fishing port) in Tripoli. A fleet of small fishing boats is moored just below the pavement, and set back from the road is a cluster of gorgeous old houses. Beyond these is a row of very modest looking cafés where two of the best sandwiches in Lebanon are found: *samkeh harrah* (spicy fish) and *akhtabût* (octopus). Both are prepared more or less the same way except that the sauce for the fish has tahini. At the entrance of the city is the clock square where there are buses and taxis to and from Beirut stop. Here there are many sandwich places and street-food vendors. A couple of stalls specialize in French fries sandwiches made with masses of crisp, hot fries that are sprinkled with lemon juice and rolled in pita bread spread with garlic sauce. An option is to add cabbage salad for a fresher taste.

Another interesting sandwich is made with *moghrabbiyeh*, which means “North African” in Arabic and is the Lebanese version of couscous. The grains are bigger and more like *m’hamssa*, the large-grain couscous. The *moghrabbiyeh* is sautéed with boiled onions and chickpeas, then rolled in a double layer of pita bread to serve as a sandwich.

### **Harissa**

*Harissa* is a spicy sauce made from red chillies, garlic, coriander, caraway seed, and olive oil. It was originated in Tunisia but is in widespread use throughout North Africa and even Europe. In Tunisia, *harissa* is used as an ingredient in a meat stew, as a flavoring for *merguez*,

or a marinade for meat and eggplants. In some European countries, it is used sometimes as a breakfast spread for *tartines* or rolls. *Harissa* is also the name of a porridge of pounded wheat and lamb that is popular in the Middle East.

## Falafel

Falafel are originally from Egypt where they are known as *ta'miyah*. However, Egyptian *ta'miyah* is softer and starchier than the Lebanese falafel. The sandwiches are also made differently. Egyptian pita is smaller and thicker, and the bread is cut across in half to produce a pocket that is filled with both *ta'miyah* and garnish. Lebanese pita, on the other hand, is large, round, and very thin. It is opened at the seam, and the two layers are placed one on top of one another with the rough side up. The filling is arranged down the middle and the bread rolled around it. As for the garnish, in Egypt, you can have potato chips or French fries, shredded lettuce, or tomatoes, radishes, or pickles, while in Lebanon, the choice is generally herbs, tomatoes, and pickles. Only the tahini sauce is constant in both countries although its name differs, *tahina* in Egypt and *tarator* in Lebanon.

## Grilled Meats

A successful mini-chain in Lebanon called *Kebabji* (meaning kebab maker) specializes in kebab sandwiches with kefta, shish kebab, or shish tawük (chicken kebabs). The sandwich makers can make up to a dozen sandwiches at a time. They lay the opened pita breads in a row, slightly overlapping each other but leaving the middle free. Each bread is spread with a little hummus, then the kebabs ordered by the customer are pulled off the skewer and laid onto the hummus. Finally, a few slices of pickles are scattered alongside the meat. The breads are pulled apart, rolled, wrapped in paper, and stuffed inside a Kebabji-branded paper bag. Everything is done so quickly that it is quite mesmerizing to watch. The only snag to this superefficiency and speed is that you have to wait for your meat to cook on the charcoal barbecue, although it is reassuring to know that the meat is cooked to order.

*Anissa Helou*

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## Liberia

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The Republic of Liberia is a coastal country located in western Africa that shares borders with Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire. Its coastline stretches 360 miles along the Atlantic Ocean and its capital, Monrovia, derives its name from the former president James Monroe, who supported the idea of creating colonies of free blacks in Africa. The population of approximately four million people is extremely diverse, including but not limited to Mende, Gola, Kpelle, Mandingo, and

Bassa and a significant population of descendants of formerly enslaved Africans, or Americo-Liberians, who returned to the continent from the United States under James Monroe's initiative starting in 1822. Along with Ethiopia, the country boasts the distinction of never having been colonized by European powers. Like its neighbor Sierra Leone, it is the only other country on the continent organized specifically as a colony for African Americans (freedmen and escaped slaves) in the 1800s.

English is the official language, but because the country is so ethnically diverse, approximately 30 languages are also spoken. A creolized form of English is used by the majority of the population. The country's climate is warm and humid like the rest of western Africa. Historically, the country has been part of both the Mali and Songhai Empires and became a republic in 1847. During the 1990s, civil war raged throughout the country stunting economic growth and leaving millions of Liberians with the difficult task of rebuilding when the last conflict finally ended in 2007.

The primary staples in the Liberian kitchen are cassava cooked and processed in various forms, rice, palm oil, and butter, and dried, smoked, or fresh fish, and meat. Each meal consists of a combination of these ingredients and supplemented by such greens as sweet potato leaves, spinach, and cassava leaves. Leafy greens are usually finely chopped, pureed, and served cooked with meat as a sauce. Such vegetables as okra, eggplant, cucumbers, and pumpkin, a squash with a flavor and texture similar to kabocha, are usually stewed with meat or fish and served with a starchy staple such as rice or *dumbo*, the Liberian national dish, which consists of boiled, pounded cassava, either of which accompanies nearly every meal. Plantains, sweet (ripe) or green (unripe), are served fried as snacks or side dishes. Tropical fruits are also an important part of the Liberian diet. Like other western African cuisines, bitter flavors, slippery and oily textures, and spiciness are favored. One dish that embodies all of these characteristics is the very popular dish known as *palava sauce*, whose key ingredients are palm oil, chilies, and pureed leafy greens with a slippery, mucilaginous texture.

Rice is an important part of the Liberian diet and agricultural landscape. It is the foundation for many dishes including *jollof rice*, an iconic dish that also includes chicken, shrimp, and different types of vegetables. Such root vegetables as sweet potatoes and yams are important to the diet in addition to cassava. They are eaten roasted, mashed, fried, and often drizzled with palm oil or butter.

## Major Street Foods

### Goat Stew

Small cookshops are found on the street of the country's capital, Monrovia. These are usually open fronted with cooking done in the shop or outside it. Customers can sit on small benches or stand and eat, all out in the open. One of the main dishes is

a highly spiced (with chilies) goat stew. Served at every festival and when meat is available, at home, it is a favorite of people taking lunch or buying it to take home in evenings.

## Cassava

Pounded cassava, the home staple called *domboy* or *fufu*, is also sold at cookshops as an accompaniment to stews. *Fufu* is the staple starch of West Africa and is consumed in many other parts of the continent. Cassava can also be sliced and fried into chips and as such a popular street food.

## Fruits

As a tropical country, many fruits such as bananas, mangoes, coconut, and citrus fruits are popular. Of course, fried plantain chips stand alongside cassava as among the best-loved street snacks.

## Peanuts

Peanuts are also a staple of the Liberian diet they are in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Roasted and boiled, they are sold by vendors in town and country. Alongside them are commercially made and packaged candies.

## Drinks

Fresh fruit juices, coconut water, and carbonated beverages from such international companies as Coca Cola are common beverages traditionally sold to accompany street foods.

*Rachel Finn*

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# M

## Mexico

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Mexico has a great street-food tradition that has influenced the whole world's food. Public squares in the mornings and evenings are filled with food carts, stands, and strolling vendors with trays and baskets. Anywhere a traveler goes, in cities and towns, in markets and festivals, the person is bound to find these colorful scenes with interesting and delicious foods.

Mexico is a diverse nation, whose geography, topography, climates, and peoples and local cultures vary greatly. Naturally, these elements make for varieties of food traditions. For instance, dishes made along the tropical coastlines will not be the same as those in the mountainous interiors. There are, however, many similarities among these traditions so that a distinctive Mexican cuisine exists. Tacos are the best example of the most famous national street-food dish and enchiladas are found in almost every Mexican restaurant.

Called either Mesoamerica or North America, Mexico's territory runs a thousand miles from its northern border with the United States south to Guatemala and Belize and other Central American countries beyond. The northern regions tend to have a drier climate with large desert areas, while further south, the climate is tropical and has jungles. Between these climatic extremes, there are diverse landforms and climatic zones. Each has a different climate depending on latitude and altitude. Large parts of Mexico are covered by mountains. Between them lie fertile plains and basins, some cut by rivers. The best known is the southern altiplano, or high plains, which includes the capital, Mexico City. Temperatures in the higher mountains of the north and center are temperate, as are high plains through much of the year. Mexico also has long flat coastlines: the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea on the east and the Pacific Ocean on the west. Many of these coasts are warm year-round, hot and humid in many places, and have become vacation resorts since the 1950s. Cancun in the Yucatan, Acapulco and Puerto Vallarta on the Pacific coast are among the most famous and popular for North Americans.

For the pre-Hispanic peoples of Mexico, the most famous being Mexica (or Aztecs) and Mayans, corn was the most important grain. Pre-Hispanic peoples had many different kinds of corn, ranging from sweet to hard. Sweet corn could be boiled up and served on the cob flavored with chili powder. Hard corn was usually boiled with calcium limestone to release the full nutritive value of the grain, then mashed into a dough to be used in many ways. Everyone ate plenty of tortillas and



Mexicans still do—it is the staple of their diets. Made into round disks and baked on a griddle, tortillas can be filled with anything: when folded over they are called tacos. The dough can be made into other shapes such as fatter *gorditas*, or *chalupas*, flat shapes with raised edges. Dough can also be filled, wrapped in corn leaves, and steamed into tamales. Tamales remain as one of the most popular handheld foods especially at religious and other festive times.

Aztecs ate cooked beans and squash, often in the form of stews, as well as some meat stews on special occasions. The only domesticated animals at the time were turkeys (the ancestors of all today's domesticated turkeys), a kind of duck, dogs, and the *cochineal*, an insect used for coloring. All other animal proteins were hunted in the wild, from deer to rabbits, rodents, fowl, and such insects as grasshoppers (called *chapulines*). Many would later be replaced by new animals.

In 1519, a small force of Spaniards led by Hernan Cortez landed on Mexico's east coast. Within two years, aided by native Mexican allies, the Spanish destroyed the Aztecs, took over their empire, and soon conquered the rest of the country. Not only did they install Spanish as the official language and Catholicism as the religion, but they brought many new foods, ones that today are integral to Mexican cuisine. Cows, pigs, chickens, sheep, goats, milk and cheese, wheat, barley, rye, citrus fruits, grapes, cilantro, olives, lettuces, oregano, and many spices were established in Mexico and Latin America. Modern Mexican cuisine is a fusion of native plants, animals, and cooking techniques and new ones brought from Europe and Asia.

The dishes considered as Mexican street food appear in several kinds of places. One is on streets where it is sold from carts, trucks, and semipermanent stands. Some may be year-round, for instance, as food carts on public squares or in front of churches. Another kind is found in the many indoor markets, a permanent stand called *fonda*, where customers can get breakfast, quick snacks, and even full take-out meals. A third kind of food vending is done at weekly markets or flea markets called a *tianguis*. Mexican street food has also migrated to restaurants both at home and abroad, mainly in the form of tacos.

## Insects

Insects have always been a part of Mexican cuisine. Water beetles and their larvae, mosquito eggs, ant eggs, moth larvae from maguey plants, and grasshoppers were eaten in pre-Hispanic times and still are. Some are found in street food. In markets such as those in Oaxaca, heaping mounds of dried and marinated grasshoppers (called

*chapulines*) are sold to eager eaters. They are toasted, put in tacos, and served with a spicy sauce. Not only are grasshoppers tasty, but they are healthier than other meats because they eat only wholesome grain and have very little fat. As many diners say, insects are all proteins and, with grasshoppers, their spiky legs serve as built-in toothpicks.

## Cochineal

One of Mexico's most valuable insects is used for coloring in fabrics and for food. The cochineal is a small insect that feeds on cactus plants. What makes it special is its coloring, a deep red called carmine. Cochineals have been domesticated and harvested for many centuries, especially in the state of Oaxaca. The females settle on a cactus leaf and cover themselves with a thin whitish-gray or silvery shell—they look like silvery specs on the green

leaves. When mature, the shells are scraped off the leaf, killed in boiling water, and then dried. They are ground into a red paste. Cochineal is used in traditional rug weaving and fabric dyeing in Oaxaca, but its widest use is as a food coloring. Many processed food products use it, and though government regulations ensure that it is listed as an ingredient, most consumers do not know that they are eating insects.

Street food has always been served thought of as cheap food for the poorest people in Mexican society. This was true in the past, and is still to some degree now, but street food has also become popular among students and tourists. Guidebooks, newspapers, magazines, and blogs routinely talk about which eating places are good and what to buy there. In part, this appreciation comes from the fact that a large percentage of food sold on streets and markets is made at home. Women are the chief cooks and vendors in many, if not most of the street—fast-food venues. The food they make often comes from their own home recipes, so there is variety in preparations from stand to stand. Stews (*cocidos*) or meats and vegetables for tacos will come straight from home kitchens. The best cooks are always popular among a broad cross section of the population. Certainly tamales are homemade. In many places where there is space, market *fondas* for instance, women vendors make tortillas on the spot from fresh corn dough. Other shapes such as *gorditas* and *chalupas* are almost always made by hand on site. Outdoor stands usually buy their tortillas and stack them up for use during the day. Such conditions are ripe for pathogens and so are other prepared foods. Mexican authorities and tourist guides issue regular warnings about food-borne illnesses—they are fairly common. Mexicans have a jokey name for gastric distress brought on by eating tainted, or at least unfamiliar, food: *tourista*.

The basic ingredients of street food include cooked meats—pork, beef, chicken, and lamb or goat. These are usually cooked by grilling, frying, in stews, and, with goat and lamb, by roasting. Common vegetables and grains are corn served either on the cob or cooked into stews; grilled onions, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, many greens, jicama, sweet potatoes, zucchini, cactus leaves (thornless, cut into strips and marinated in vinegar), chayote, and both sweet and hot peppers, among many others. Such grains as amaranth, legumes—beans and lentils—and such fruits as melons, apples, quince, berries of all kinds, citrus,

## Chilies

Everyone knows that chili peppers have reputations for being spicy hot. In fact, these fruits vary greatly in heat and flavors. The word comes directly from the indigenous Nahuatl language, *chilli*, and they were critical in pre-Hispanic food, as they are today, because they are full of vitamins C and A. The name “pepper” comes from Europe, where it referred

to black pepper that came from India. When hot chilies appeared, people likened their spiciness to black pepper and the name stuck. People domesticated chilies at least 500 years ago and changed their qualities. The sweet peppers, most popular today, were bred in Spain, after they were imported from Mexico.

pineapples, mangoes, papaya, guava, sapotes of several kinds, tomatoes (they are fruit), and tomatillos (a green fruit that looks like small tomatoes) are all widely used in Mexican dishes. Cheese is another common ingredient. These are often cheeses that melt, especially *panela*, Chihuahua, which comes from the state of that name, and Oaxaca, a braided cheese used in central and southern Mexico. *Queso fresco* is a fresh cow and goat milk mixture that is crumbled over many tortilla-based dishes.

Almost all foods are flavored with dried and fresh chilies. Chilies come in many varieties, each with its own flavor and level of spicy hotness. Each region of Mexico favors certain kinds of chilies. Generally, the further south one goes, the hotter the chilies. *Jalapenos*, named for a town in Veracruz state, are used all over Mexico, as is the hotter *chili arbol*, but in the Yucatan, the superhot *habanero* is often used in sauces. Dried chilies are highly flavorful and are the glory of Mexican cookery. Rich sauces called *moles* are composed of three kinds of dried chilies plus many spices. The red mildly spicy guajillo chili is widely used in central and northern Mexico, while in places like Guerrero, the small round *cascabel* is favored. Three chilies, the *ancho*, *pasilla*, and *mulatto* are used to make the famous *Mole Poblano*, while in the state of Oaxaca, the classic black mole uses the Chilhuacle Negro. There are dozens and dozens of specific chilies used in Mexico, from state to state, town to town, and even home to home. The sauces in street foods can vary in just the same ways.

## Tacos

Without question, tacos are the leading street and fast foods in Mexico. These ancient dishes were consumed by thousands in the markets of Aztec Tenochtitlan. The name is Spanish for a “wad” or “plug” and means a handful of wrapped food. Tacos are composed of thin flat cakes made from dough that are toasted on a

griddle, topped with various fillings, then folded over and eaten out of hand. Tortillas vary by region. In most of the country, they are made of corn, but in the north, wheat flour is more common. Tortillas range in size from small white ones (*blancas*) to the most common four-inch, and up to six inches and more, such as those made from blue corn in markets in the states of Guerrero and Puebla. Most tortillas are soft and are often doubled to hold wet ingredients, though some are fried until crispy (*tostadas*). So popular are tacos that they are eaten at all times of the day and night.

People going to work or out to shop in the morning often pick up a taco or two for breakfast. They are often sold by women from baskets (*tacos de canasta*) along the streets. Because the tacos are premade and kept warm in cloth or paper, they are called “sweated” tacos (*tacos suadados*). Fillings are simpler than others and might include chopped meats, chopped potatoes, and some with cheese. Early morning tacos include some fillings that North Americans might find unappetizing. *Tacos de cabeza* come from a cow’s head that is cooked over steam for a long time. Customers can choose from slices of cheek, tongue, lips, ears, brains, or eyes. Since the cow’s head is leftover meat, it is cheap and thus popular with lower-income people and those with adventurous tastes. *Barbacoa* is another kind of taco often eaten in the morning, especially in market fondas where the more elaborate cooking can be done. Barbacoa is traditionally made by placing a goat or sheep in a pit with heated charcoal and then cooking it overnight. Alternately, pieces of meat are wrapped in banana leaves or the skin of maguey plant leaves with sauce and cooked. A visitor to almost any large market will be able to enjoy this treat.

In the evening hours, after work, and on weekends, taco stands appear in all sorts of public places. Standard preparations are the usual ground or shredded meats, cheese, and legumes or potatoes, and vegetables, each usually topped with chopped onions and cilantro. Stews are also prepared and dished up in doubled tortillas. There are a number of specialized ones that are native to different states, but are now popular throughout the country. One is the *taco de carne asada*, meaning grilled meats. Associated with the cattle-raising country of the north, the meat is usually thinly cut slices of beef—often skirt steak—that has been marinated and then quickly cooked on an open grill. In northern Mexico, grilled whole knob onions and perhaps a small guero (yellow) pepper accompany the taco. Salsas of varying hotness are also available for pouring on the taco. *Carnitas* are a specialty of Michoacán and are now served everywhere. They are chunks of pork that are deep-fried in large copper kettles for long periods until they are crispy on the outside but with tender interiors. The pork is then pulled apart, sauced, and served. All of the pig is used, and many people prefer the fatty and gristly bits because of the texture.

Michoacán is also home to a kind of chicken dish called *pollo placero*. A wide copper pan with a deep well in the middle is set over a heat source. Oil is placed in

the well, chicken pieces set in it, and cooked until fried. When done, the chicken is placed on the pan's wide rim, cut up, and put into tacos. Similar pans are used in other parts of Mexico to fry chicken and other meats. One special taco cannot be made on streets but appears in fondas and restaurants. *Tacos al pastor*, meaning shepherd tacos, are very much like Middle Eastern *shawarma*: only these are made of pork. Layers of meat are built up on a spit, which is then cooked upright, while turning over an open fire. The cook slices off thin slivers and serves them in tacos. The dish was introduced by Lebanese immigrants who made the dish in their homeland with lamb. In the city of Puebla, these are called *tacos arabes* when they are served on a firm of pita bread and liberally dosed with guajillo sauce. On the Pacific coast, fish tacos have become popular because freshly caught fish is widely available. Often fresh fish filets are batter dipped and then served, though fish can be grilled whole, then placed in a taco with sauce. Fish tacos have spread to the United States.

## Tamales

Tamales are one of Mexico's greatest food preparations and come in many regional varieties. They are not only eaten on the street, but also served at almost all special occasions, prepared days in advance of the event by women of the household. Tamales are usually called *tamales rojo* (red) when they are filled with shredded pork or beef in a red chili sauce. *Tamales verde* will have similar meats but are mixed with a green slightly sourish and tangy *tomatillo* sauce. *Tamales dulce* (sweet) are made with such dried fruits as raisins or berries, fillings, and are meant for desserts. Tamales vary by region. In Oaxaca and other southern states, larger tamales with red, green, and sweet fillings steamed in banana leaves are specialties. Fancier tamales have complex moles in them, even the famous *huitlacoche*, a black fungus, found on corn. It is no exaggeration to say that hot tamales are a singular identifier of Mexican culture.

## Enchiladas, Gorditas, Sopas, and Tortas

North Americans are used to eating enchiladas in restaurants where they are covered in lots of sauce and melted cheese. The originals are street food, composed of larger tortillas rolled up and dipped in sauce between bites. The name, enchilada, means to dip in a chili sauce. Some may have simple fillings such as green onions, cheese, chopped fried potatoes, strips of grilled green or *poblano* peppers (called *rajas*), or strips of meat as in the plaza style of Michoacán.

Varieties of open corn-dough-based foods are also abundant on the street-food scene. Called *sopas*, these are small disks of dough baked on a *comal* (flat metal griddle, used in making tortillas) that are topped with different ingredients. The

cheapest are bean preparations, sometimes with grated hard cheese on them, or cooked meats with chili sauce, among others. Chopped potatoes and cold salads such as finely diced tomatoes, garlic, onions, peppers, and cilantro are among other kinds of *sopes*. *Tostados*, or crisply fried tortillas, can be considered a kind of *sope*.

Gordita, or “little fat one,” is a thicker cake made from corn dough (or wheat dough in northern Mexico) that is fried in shallow or deep cooking oil, and split along the side or down the middle and filled. Ingredients are much the same as in tacos, but are usually wetter stews made from various meats. One variation is *chicharrones*, fried pork skins that are further cooked in sauce to make them soft. *Rajas*, cheeses, potatoes, eggs, and more are very common. Like other snacks, *gorditas* are usually served with chili sauces or salsas.

*Tortas* are somewhat different in that they are really sandwiches. The base is usually a *bolillo*, a long, hard-crust roll with pointed ends. This is cut in half and filled with cold ingredients that range from lunch meats—cold sliced tongue, for instance—to cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, or even tuna and chicken salads in modern versions. *Tortas* are very popular as lunch standards.

## ***Guisados***

*Guisados*, or stews, are considered by Mexicans to be the most flavorful and filling of all street foods. Usually they are made at home by women and sold by them or their families on the street and in *fondas*. The kinds of stews vary by region, the differences based mainly on what kinds of chilies are used in the preparation. Meats, such as pork, chicken, and beef (beef more in the north) and tripe (sliced animal stomach), are usually on the menu. On the coasts, fish, shrimp, and octopus are often used for stew. There are also vegetable stews, some with greens, which provide a healthier alternative. A large pot stands on a heat source to keep warm, and the vendor scoops out a portion with a big ladle onto a plate or into a tortilla. The *guisado* can be garnished with sour cream, chopped onions, chopped tomatoes, and cilantro. This hearty dish often serves as a dinner for people coming home from work.

## **Drinks**

Drinks are almost as important as the food itself in Mexico. Vendors selling soft drinks are everywhere: some serve from baskets, and others from carts, trucks, and even trunks of cars. Major international brands like Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola are universal, but their formulas differ from their products in North America. Sugar, rather than high fructose corn syrup, is preferred by Mexicans, so Mexican colas

have a special flavor that others do not have. Jarritos (“Little Jars”) is a popular brand of carbonated drinks made with more carbonation than American sodas and natural flavors that appeal to Mexican tastes. They include *guayaba* (guava), *Jamaica* (hibiscus flowers), *limón* (lime), *tamarido* (tamarind), and mango among others. The flavors in Jarritos replicate those in another popular drink called *licuados*. These are made with a milk base, placed in a blender with fresh fruits, and whipped into a thick drink. *Licuados* are sold on streets, in special open storefront juice bars, and plenty of other places. The most traditional drink of all is *atole*. It is very ancient, dating back to the earliest civilizations. It is composed of corn dough, mixed with water, sugar, and other flavorings such as cinnamon, vanilla, and chocolate, which is then heated. *Atole* is very filling and thus it is a prime breakfast drink, often eaten with a roll of taco by people going to work each day. It is found on streets and in markets and is almost always homemade by the vendor.

### Other Street Foods

Mexico has a large sugar production industry, so it is not surprising that people love sweets of all kinds. In any neighborhood and public venues, *raspados* vendors ply their trade. These are treats of shaved ice placed in cone-shaped cups and then covered in sweet fruit-flavored syrup. The flavors are the same as in soft drinks and *licuados*: only these ices are favored by children. *Paletas* are similar in that they are ices flavored with fruit formed into popsicles around a stick. Mexicans are also great candy makers. Among favorites sold on the streets are hard candies of all kinds along with a favorite, *dulce de leche* (milk sweets). There are several kinds of this candy, the best known being something like a soft caramel. *Jamoncillo* has several regional variations—in the north it is a hardened milk-and-sugar mixture, but in south central Mexico it is made of ground pumpkin seeds mixed with sugar. *Camotes* is a candy made from sweet potatoes mixed with sugar, the best known of which is made in the city of Puebla and called *camotes de Santa Clara*. While candy is a big industry in Mexico, most are considered treats and are not eaten on a daily basis.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## Mongolia

Mongolia is the world's largest landlocked nation, covering approximately 604,000 square miles of northern Asia, wedged between China and Russia's Siberia. A population of only about 3 million makes it among the most sparsely populated countries in the world. Called *Mongol Uls* in Mongolian, it is also known as Outer Mongolia, to differentiate it from the Mongol-inhabited region of China known as Inner Mongolia.

Almost 95 percent of the country's population is ethnic Mongol, and Mongolian is the country's official language. The dominant religion is Tibetan Buddhism, usually blended with traditional shamanistic/spiritist beliefs. However, due to the efforts of the Soviets to eradicate religion, about 40 percent of Mongolians now identify themselves as not being part of any religion.

Almost 80 percent of the land is steppe pastureland, which supports huge herds of grazing livestock. The remaining 20 percent of the country is divided almost equally between barren desert and forested mountains. Less than 1 percent of the land is arable.

Mongolians have traditionally been nomadic herders, but both freedom from the Soviet Union and the more recent discovery of large deposits of coal, copper, and gold have both boosted the economy and drawn more people into urban environments. Still, about half the population is nomadic.



A Chinese man selling fresh produce on a street in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia. (Nico Smit/Dreamstime.com)



Among the nomad population, the amount and types of food vary with the season. In summer, the consumption of dairy products is the heaviest. Everything that can be milked is milked: yaks, camels, horses, goats, sheep. Meat is more heavily consumed during the rest of the year. Cooking is generally done once a day, unless there are guests. Breakfast and lunch are the biggest meals of the day and generally consist of *boortsog* (fried bread), salty milk tea, boiled mutton, broth with noodles or other starch, and dairy products, depending on what is available—fresh milk, sour clotted milk, yogurt, cheese, curds, or *airag* (fermented mare’s milk, the national drink of Mongolia).

In urban settings, meals vary only slightly from this, with the major differences largely relics of Russian occupation: borsch occasionally replaces mutton broth, and a salad of shredded beet, carrot, and/or cabbage will likely appear. However, as more people move to cities, Mongolians are experiencing a far wider range of foods (though not always with positive results, as more sugar enters the diet).

Dumplings are tremendously popular, in both rural and urban settings. Sizes vary, but usually not composition. The dough is flour and water, and the filling is chopped meat (usually mutton) with onion and garlic. *Buuz* (pronounced “boats”) are two-bite dumplings that are similar to, though fatter than, pot stickers. *Buuz* are steamed. *Bansh* are much smaller and are boiled. *Hushuur* is much larger—about five or six inches on its longest side. Because it is fried, *hushuur* is more portable than the other two dumplings, and it often appears at outdoor venues and festivals, where it is eaten out of hand.

Mongolians happily celebrate anything that marks a milestone in life or the year. They also have a strict code of hospitality. Anyone can approach a ger (the round, wool-felt tents of the nomads) and ask for food and drink. For special events, white foods (dairy products) are served first and are considered pure and noble. Then red foods (meat) are served.

## Major Street Foods

The culture of Mongolia does not historically include a lot of street food—largely because the history of Mongolia has not generally involved streets. However, even in traditional culture, there has always been a need for portable food, from picnics to festivals, with *hushuur* and grilled meats topping the list here.

Today, as more and more Mongolians find themselves in urban settings, they rely on street vendors to supply them with foods that were once part of their daily lives. An almost ubiquitous feature of the both urban and rural landscapes is the *guan*, a generally modest establishment that offers Mongolian comfort food, including soup, salty milk tea, and either *buuz* or *hushuur*. A *guan* can be located in a building, a ger, a small hut, or even a railway car.

Cynthia Clampitt

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## Morocco

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The Kingdom of Morocco is located on the northwest coast of Africa separated from Spain by just 8 miles of the Mediterranean Sea. Together with *Tunisia*, *Algeria*, *Mauritania*, and *Libya*, Morocco is part of the Maghreb region and shares cultural, historical, linguistic, and culinary ties with these countries. In 1912, it was divided into a French and a Spanish protectorate and regained its independence in 1956.



Stand selling snails in Marrakesh, Morocco, on Place Jamal El Fna. (Marianehret/Dreamstime.com)

Moroccan street food is more distinguished and varies greatly in some respects, from food sold in carts across other countries in the North African desert, perhaps because it features dishes influenced by several food traditions, including African, Andalusian, Berber, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Jewish. There are slight regional variations, but a common theme is the concept of preparing the meal in real time, with the customer involved in many steps of the process from selecting the meats to picking out the seasonings and bread type for a sandwich. Moroccan street vendors pioneered in involving the customer in the food preparation process, a model that many American fast-food chains have successfully adapted in recent years.

Though street food is plentiful in Morocco on roadsides and beachfront cities alike, there is a “street-food epicenter” located in Marrakesh called *Jemaa el Fna* in the form of an outdoor marketplace, or *souk*. Translated as “square of the dead,” *Jemaa el Fna* is a large cultural center mainly attracting tourists by day and an outdoor food market at night for both tourists and locals. Because of the predominant presence of tourists in *Jemaa el Fna*, many of the vendors are dressed in traditional colorful costumes, including the water and juice sellers who keep the liquid cool in insulated water bags and serve the drinks in brass cups. Street food was not widely available in Morocco until the 1980s. Before that, food was closely tied with the home, and eating out was only reserved for the well-to-do. Over the past few decades when the margin of disposable income grew and many more women have chosen professional careers outside the home, a more robust “eating-out culture” has developed.

## Major Street Foods

### ***Bocadillos: The Mediterranean Influence***

One of the most striking influences on Moroccan street food comes from Spanish and French cuisines. When street snacks started gaining popularity later in the 1980s, *bocadillo*, a Spanish word for sandwich, became used interchangeably for sandwich all over Morocco. A *bocadillo* is made differently depending on the region, but a common denominator is the type of bread, which is a French-style baguette. In more modernized cities like Tangier, the *bocadillo* can be stuffed with salad and thin layers of *jambon* (deli meat) and *fromage* (French for “cheese”). Other popular options include a Moroccan version of a Tunisian food called *fricassée*, a tuna sandwich that includes *harissa*, a spicy red pepper and caper mixture borrowed from Tunisian cuisine, as well as spiced mayo, boiled eggs, and an option of adding *pomme frites* (French fries) on top. For those who like an uncomplicated sandwich, a *bocadillo* stuffed with an omelet is almost always available.

## ***Boubouch*: Snails for the Adventurous**

Though *escargot* is typically considered a French delicacy served in upscale restaurants, Moroccans have been serving it out of street carts for many decades. Named *boubouch* (or *b'bouch*) by the locals, snails—steamed or stewed—have a reputation for being a succulent snack in Morocco and are widely available all over the country. In Rabat, the capital city, many snail sellers have set up their stalls on roadsides or in the *souk*. Similarly, *boubouch* can also be found in Casablanca and along the shore, served steaming hot in little bowls with accompanying toothpicks.

Though the snail concept may be borrowed from the French, the preparation style is not. The Moroccan version of *escargot* forgoes the garlic butter sauce in favor of a more traditional concoction that is sworn by many to heal the common cold and other ailments. The aromatic, often spicy, broth served along with the mollusks includes at least a few of the following, the specifics depending on the vendor's recipe: cumin, ginger, licorice root, thyme, aniseed, sweet and spicy peppers, fresh mint, orange peel, and crushed Arabic gum (or mastic)—a resin obtained from the mastic tree and used extensively in Middle Eastern cooking. Sometimes it is made with a healthy dose of fresh garlic as well, but that depends on the region. Moroccan natives are used to *boubouch* and even those who do not like the texture of snails sometimes order the bowl of spicy broth for its health benefits.

## ***Sfenj*: Morocco's Most Popular Dessert**

Typical French-style pastries—*pain au chocolat*, *Napoleon*, *éclair*, and *petites tartes*—are more popular in Moroccan bakeries than on the street, though the occasional street vendor may carry a few of them alongside other more traditional Moroccan desserts. One dessert widely available all over Morocco is *sfenj*: basically small doughnut-shaped pieces of dough that are fried. The word *sfen* means “sponge” in Arabic and refers to the dessert's soft and absorbent composition. A simple mixture of flour, salt, yeast, and water is left to rise for a few hours. The batter is then made into doughnut shapes and dipped into hot oil to fry. They are pulled out of the oil with skewers, sometimes dusted with powdered sugar or honey, strung up in a thread similar to a Hawaiian lei, and sold to sweet-craving onlookers. *Sfenj* is typically eaten in the morning with coffee, as a midday snack or as a post-lunch dessert with mint green tea. (In Morocco, as in many Mediterranean countries, the main meal is served around two or three in the afternoon.)

## **Meat Sandwiches**

In Morocco, “know the origin of your meat” is taken to another level even for street food. Instead of serving customers ready-made cooked meats, many street vendors

let the customer select a cut of raw meat and watch it grilled right in front of them. These roadside butcher stalls, which are especially popular at rest stops along well-traveled routes, often feature different meats—lamb, beef, and chicken—hanging from a pole, with bouquets of parsley and cilantro hanging in between them. The greens purportedly keep away flies, with the added bonus of imparting a pleasant smell that overshadows that of the raw meat. The same stand usually has ground beef available for purchase, sometimes already mixed with spices and ready to shape into *kefta* or meatballs.

After customers have picked their raw meats, they take their purchases to a nearby stall that specializes in grilling. Here too, customer involvement is encouraged: They can pick the spices and vegetables to be grilled alongside the meat, as well as the style of bread that will serve as the sandwich for the mixture.

Another popular street food is *raas* or lamb's head. As unappetizing as that may sound to some Westerners, the meat is incredibly tender as it is steamed and then served with a little side of salt and cumin for individual dipping.

## Other Street Foods

### ***Mehlaba*: The Moroccan Milk Bar**

Largely a Moroccan phenomenon, the *mehlaba*, literally “the dairy place,” is a word derived from the Arabic word for milk, *haleeb*. Found in many Moroccan cities, these milk bars are essentially smoothie-making stations that sell dairy concoctions and juices as well as other snacks such as ready-made *bocadillos*. Milk smoothies are made to order. The customer selects from a wide range of fruits and flavors to be blended in, the most popular of which include avocados, bananas, dates, and various fruits.

### **Moroccan Snacks**

Snacks popular in Morocco, especially along the boardwalk, include grilled corn on the cob, called *kob'wal*, often eaten with a little bit of saltwater for added flavor. Freshly roasted and smoked, mixed nuts, peanuts, and chickpeas are wrapped in paper cones and sold in stands all over Morocco. Seasonal roasted chestnuts are especially popular in colder months. Dried figs and dates, native to the North African desert, are displayed in heaps in street stands. Often they are stuffed into various finger foods and pastries.

*Heba Saleh*

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# N

## Nepal

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The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is a landlocked mountainous country bordered to the north by Tibet, and to the south, east, and west by India. It has an area of 57,000 square miles and a population of approximately 30 million. Nepal was virtually isolated from the rest of the world until the 1950s. The country then became a magnet for tourists, including trekkers, mountain climbers, and young people from Western countries.

Nepal is a predominantly rural country. The largest crop and the dietary staple is rice, which is grown mainly in the central region. At higher drier altitudes, people cultivate wheat, corn, oats, barley, millet, buckwheat, amaranth, and root vegetables. The climate varies by altitude, and in the winter, temperatures in the capital Kathmandu can drop to below freezing. Perhaps because of this, street food plays a smaller role in Nepal than it does in India. In fact, many of the most popular street-food items are Indian and sold by both Nepali and Indian vendors, including *jalebi* (spirals of deep-fried chickpea batter), samosas (deep-fried triangular pastries filled with vegetables or meat), and pakoras (vegetables fried in a chickpea batter).

In Kathmandu, the capital, street-food vendors can be found near schools and businesses and in markets such as Indra Chowk. As in India, most vendors are men. Tea shops called *chiya pasal* are popular spots in the morning and evening. Customers stop by for a cup of milky sweet tea and a chat with their friends. Tea is also sold by street vendors and served in glasses.

In rural areas, roadside cafes that are set up to accommodate bus riders and trekkers serve the standard Nepali meal *dal-bhat-tarkari*: rice, black or yellow dal, mustard greens or other seasonal vegetables, a chicken or goat stew, and hot and sour pickles. A specialty sold near rivers in rural areas is *tareko machha*, a whole fish or eel (*bam*) deep-fried in spicy chickpea flour batter. Traditionally food was served on the leaf of a sal tree, but today a plastic or paper plate is more common.

## Major Street Foods

### *Momos*

The most famous Nepali street food, *momos*, is of Tibetan origin. They are small steamed or fried dumplings made from wheat flour filled with spicy ground meat





The most famous Nepali street food, *momos*, are of Tibetan origin. They are popular throughout the Indian subcontinent and even sold in street food carts in New York City. (Shariff Che'Lah/Dreamstime.com)

(generally pork or buffalo) and served with a hot and sour sauce usually made of tomatoes and cilantro. They were exported to India, where they are one of the most popular street foods.

### ***Sekuwa* (Nepali Barbecue)**

Pieces of meat (usually goat, pork, or chicken) are marinated in spices and garlic, threaded on skewers, and cooked over charcoal. *Sekuwa* is sold in dedicated stalls and in restaurants. Another version, called *tas*, is made by sautéing sliced meat with onions, tomato, garlic, and other spices. Both are often served with *chiura*: dehusked rice that is beaten into flat light dry flakes. A standard accompaniment to Nepali foods, it is sold by many street vendors.

### ***Sukuti* (Meat Jerky)**

Thin strips of meat, often buffalo, are dried slowly over charcoal until they are crisp. These strips are shredded and mixed with salt, ginger, garlic, and spices and mustard oil. Chopped onions and tomatoes may be served on the side.

### **Roasted Soybeans and Popcorn**

Soybeans are roasted in an earthenware pot, mixed with popped corn, and sometimes served with a hot and sour chutney. Another version is made with roasted fava beans.

## Other Street Foods

Corn is roasted over hot coals and served with ground-up green chilies. Peanuts are baked in their shells and eaten on the spot. They are especially popular in winter when people enjoy them while basking in the warmth of the sun.

### Tilauri

To make this popular sweet, sugarcane juice is boiled down to produce a thick dark syrup, which hardens as it cools. It is mixed with sesame seeds and shaped into sticks or balls.

## Seasonal Fruits

Nepal is a paradise for fruits, including tangerines, oranges, persimmon, custard apples, papayas, guavas, Indian gooseberries, bananas, watermelons, lychee, and many more. Distinctive Nepali fruits are *lapsi*, a small round fruit with a soft, white, sticky, sour flesh and green skin that is available between October and January, and *kaphal*, a tree fruit that looks like a red raspberry with a pit available in March–April. Fruit is sold fresh or squeezed into a juice by vendors at little kiosks with mounds of peeled fruit behind a glass counter.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## The Netherlands

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Situated on the northwestern rim of the European mainland, the Netherlands have a rich history as a seafaring nation. The country's main seaports Rotterdam and Amsterdam have been receiving foodstuffs of all description for several centuries, both for local consumption and for reexportation. Always avid traders who grasped whatever means they could to gain and hold their position, by the middle of the 17th century, the Dutch had replaced the Spanish as the most important cacao traders in the world, and much of the world's production continues to pass through these ports. Trade and subsequent colonization brought in spices from the Indonesian islands and cane sugar from its Caribbean possessions, among other things.

The country's reputation for tolerance encouraged ethnic minorities to seek shelter there. Large numbers of Sephardic Jews settled in Amsterdam when they fled the Spanish Inquisition at the end of the 15th century and French Huguenots

received a warm welcome from their Calvinist brethren upon escaping persecution in France in the latter part of the 17th century. Following World War II, Indonesia claimed independence and many Indonesians, primarily those who had fought for the Dutch during the war, left the islands to settle in the Netherlands. In the 1960s, labor shortages forced companies to look further afield for willing workers and set in train an immigration wave of Turkish and Moroccan men, who later brought their families to join them. The Dutch colony of Surinam became independent in 1975 and led to mass migration to the Netherlands. As a result of the historical development of sugar cultivation and production, the Surinamese people had varied ethnic backgrounds: African, Indian, Indonesian (predominantly Javanese), and Chinese. Natural disasters and political currents continue to bring in refugees from all parts of the world, and in recent years, Dutch society has been enriched with Vietnamese, Somalis, and Afghans among others. This ethnic composition is reflected in street and snack food in the Netherlands.

Most towns have one or more market days a week, and local councils rent out space to vendors on a contract basis. Fairs and special celebrations also attract food vendors. All sellers of food are expected to comply with HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) regulations, and inspectors carry out regular checks in the interest of public health.

## Major Street Foods

### The Snack Wall

The snack wall or *automatiek* is a well-known feature at street corners and railway stations and is one of the quickest ways to get a snack on the run. It resembles a vending machine that is built into an expanse of wall and can contain several dozen warmed compartments that hold mainly popular deep-fried snacks such as *frikandellen* (a long minced meat sausage), *kroketten* (croquettes made from thickened meat stock and pieces of meat that are usually eaten with mustard), *kaassoufflés* (literally “cheese soufflé”), which are small envelopes of thin dough with a cheese filling; *nasischijven* (rissoles made from Indonesian-style fried rice), *bamischijven* (as before, but made with noodles), and many other similar snacks. When the correct payment is inserted into the slot, the door unlocks and the snack can be removed.

### French Fries

*Patates frites* are known locally by either of the two component parts with a simplified Dutch spelling: *patat* or *friet*. It is often shortened to the diminutive *patatje*

with the kind of French fry coming after the word, for example, *patatje oorlog*. The original name is an antiquated form of French and may have originated in Belgium, where both French and Dutch are official languages. They form a cheap and warming snack. Trucks equipped with deep-fat fryers stand at strategic points in towns and cities, and consumers can choose from the following variants that come in the form of single toppings or combinations.

- *Met*: literally “with”; with mayonnaise.
- *Speciaal*: “special”; curry ketchup (which can best be described as a cross between tomato ketchup and brown sauce with spices), mayonnaise, and finely chopped onion.
- *Pinda*: “peanut”; a smooth spiced peanut sauce that is the usual accompaniment to the popular Indonesian dish of satay (grilled skewered pieces of chicken or meat).
- *Oorlog*: “war”; mayonnaise, peanut sauce, and finely chopped onion.
- *Kapsalon*: (literally “hairdressing salon”) the most recent addition to Dutch street food. Thinly sliced meat of the type cooked on rotating spits in Turkish and Middle Eastern eating establishments is arranged over the fries. Optional cheese can be added, and the whole is then grilled. It is finished off with a helping of salad and sauces such as garlic or hot pepper sauce.

## Fish

As may be expected from a country with a generous coastline, fisheries form an important part of the economy. There are more than 1,200 mobile fish vendors in the Netherlands, which together account for about 19 percent of the country’s total sales of fish. All open-air markets have at least one fish stall in the form of a fully equipped truck; many villages without a market are visited once a week by a licensed vendor. Raw fish is also sold, and any fish of choice can be fried on the spot. Most popular are chunks and fillets. *Kibbeling* consists of marinated chunks of thick white fish that are quickly pulled through a thin batter before being fried. Optional sauces are available on the side, including mayonnaise-based garlic and tartare sauces. *Kibbeling* used to be made from cod (*kabeljauw*) from which the name is derived. Nowadays cheaper and more ecological alternatives are used. The fillets are called *lekkerbekjes* and usually come from haddock or similar fish, dipped in a thin light batter before being fried and sprinkled with spiced salt.

Smoked fish, including salmon, eel, and mackerel, can be put into a soft white bread roll to be eaten on the spot.



A classic dish from The Netherlands called poffertjes. These mini pancakes are prepared on a typical hot plate while the cook is pouring new batter onto a hot plate. (Paul Hakimata/Dreamstime.com)

Lightly brined herring called *maatjesharing* is cleaned and skinned, but the last piece of the backbone is left intact so that the tail joins the two fillets. There is a purpose to this as the fish is eaten in one of two ways: on a soft bread roll sprinkled generously with freshly chopped onion, or dipped in onion, held by tail, and lowered bit by bit into a waiting mouth. This herring is governed by strict regulations on many levels. Fishing takes place in May and June when the fish has the required fat content of between 16 and 25 percent. After the fish are caught, the gills and intestines are removed, but the pancreas is left in place, because it contains enzymes that help with the curing process. The prepared herrings are soft in texture, and the brevity of the curing process prevents them from becoming too salty.

### Sweet Snacks

The tradition of selling sweet snacks at street corners dates back several centuries, but in most cases, modern techniques have replaced the solitary vendor with a simple pan or griddle. Almost every open-air market has a *stroopwafel* vendor. These thin and crisp wafers are cooked on a portable griddle, then skillfully split and sandwiched with warm, buttery caramel. *Poffertjes* (puffy little pancakes like silver dollars) are cooked to order at many markets and fairs, using a special griddle with small indentations, which give the pancakes a puffy appearance. They are eaten with a knob of butter and a sprinkling of powdered sugar. *Oliebollen* (round doughnuts with or without dried fruit) are a seasonal treat. They are made and eaten in Dutch homes on New Year's Eve, but from the beginning of November to the end of December, fully equipped trucks decorated to look like old-fashioned kitchens take up positions all over the country. The doughnuts are fried and dusted generously with powdered sugar before being eaten on the spot or taken home to share. *Appelbeignets* are also sold by the same vendors. These are round slices of apple that are dipped into batter before being fried.

## Other Street Foods

Many new foods introduced by immigrant communities are sold from small stalls and trucks that either have a fixed position or visit a different town every day. The Vietnamese refugees who settled in the Netherlands from the 1980s introduced the Vietnamese *loempia* to the Dutch public. This spring roll differs from the Chinese and Indonesian versions in being slender and elegant, with a thin and crisp wrapper. Sweet or spicy chili sauce is added to taste by the customer.

*Lahmacun*, a paper-thin Turkish bread with a smear of spicy meat topping, is known locally as *Turkse pizza* (“Turkish pizza”). It is baked quickly in an oven or on a griddle, topped with the buyer’s choice of salad items such as lettuce, cucumber, and onion, then drizzled with hot chili or garlic sauce before being rolled up into a cylinder.

Many Surinamese snacks are sold from stalls in larger cities with a more mixed population. These include *bara* (split pea fritters), bread rolls filled with curried chicken, and *roti* (Indian flatbread) stuffed with various kinds of curry.

*Gaitri Pagrach-Chandra*

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## Nigeria

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The Federal Republic of Nigeria comprises 36 states and its Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Located in West Africa, it shares borders with Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. Its southern boundary is the Gulf of Guinea on the Atlantic Ocean. Its population of more than 260 million makes it the largest country in Africa and the seventh most populous in the world. Composed of more than 250 ethnic groups, the three largest are the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba. Half of Nigerians are Muslims, 40 percent Christians, while 10 percent follow indigenous religions. The largest city, Lagos, has a population of more than 10 million. Other large urban areas are the capital Abuja, Kano, Ibadan, and Kaduna.

Nigeria has a mostly humid, tropical climate, and a wide range of topographical features, including plains, plateaus, mountains, and desert. Each of these determines what crops are grown and what are available to the local populations. The original staples were rice, millet, groundnuts, yams, and lentils. The Portuguese, who came to West Africa in the 1400s, introduced cassava, a New World plant,

potatoes, and peanuts to the region. Later Europeans brought beans and corn, while the British, who controlled Nigeria from 1914 to 1914, brought pepper, cinnamon, and nutmeg from their Indian possessions.

A traditional Nigerian meal consists of a starch and a thick stew made with meat, fish, vegetables, or a combination of meats and vegetables. The best-known starch is *fufu* made from pounded yams, plantains, or cassava. There are wide regional variations in basic dishes. In the north, the staples of the largely Muslim Hausa population are beans and sorghum. Kebabs, called *suya* or *tsere*, are popular street foods. In the east, dietary staples are pumpkin, yams, and various dumplings made from cassava, while people in the south enjoy peanut-based stews and rice. The Yorubas in southwest and central Nigeria eat cooked *gari* (cassava root powder) with stews thickened with okra, yams, stews made with peanuts, mushrooms, and rice. Only the wealthy can afford to eat meat every day. The main cooking medium is palm oil, made from ground palm kernels. Fruit, including papayas, pineapple, coconut, plantains, and mangos, is abundant. Seafood is popular along the coasts and along rivers, the fish often made into hearty stews. Milk and milk products are not usually consumed in Nigeria except in the north, where the Fulani people are traditional cattle herders. However, because of the years of British rule, people take milk and cream in their tea. Hot chili peppers are used throughout Nigeria in stews, as dips and as condiment sauces.

Street foods play a major role in the Nigerian economy. Traditional foods often take hours to process and prepare, so that some women buy street foods as a quicker way to feed their families. Women are also the main vendors of street foods, and many dishes they prepare are ones found in their customers' own home cooking. Almost everyone eats at least some of their meals on the street, and as much as half of all food expenditures is spent on street foods. Students and small merchants are major customers, especially for breakfast. Household surveys show that more than 80 percent of people buy their breakfast from vendors between 4 and 7 days a week.

Some vendors are "doorstep vendors" who set up a table and chair on the sidewalk in a residential district to sell to housewives. Others have carts that they push to the same location every day and remove at night, while others use bicycle carts or balance poles on their shoulders as they ride. Some women vendors carry the food in baskets on their heads. Bargaining in all Nigerian markets is expected, even with low-cost food. Although the initial asking price will be higher for foreigners, vendors have their "true" price; buyers who *ciniki* (bargain) will achieve a lower price.

Popular items include bananas, oranges, and peanuts (called groundnuts but not the same as the native groundnut, or *Macrotyloma geocarpum*), which are boiled or roasted and then sold in plastic bags that are filled and then twisted into round shapes.

## Major Street Foods

### Pepper Soup

Pepper soup is served in most local restaurants and hotels and on the street. It is a spicy dish made with fresh or dried hot peppers and other local herbs such as *utazi*, a very bitter herb used widely, or *ukazi*, a dried leaf found in most southern Nigerian stews and soups. Pepper soup is commonly made with goat meat and, when done in fancier style, with crayfish. Chicken and fish can be substituted depending on the region such as rivers and coasts.

### Other Soups

Other popular soups found in open-air dining spots include *ewedu* soup, made from a mucilaginous leaf (jute mallow) that gives a thick, okra-like texture to it. It can be served with *amala*, a thick brown paste made from dried, ground cassava. *Amala* can be made into a soup itself, perhaps mixed with vegetables. *Gbegiri* or black-eyed pea soup is also very popular throughout the country. As with pepper soup, these varieties usually have hot chilies in them. *Ogbono* soup is also a popular soup made from meats, vegetables, and greens and thickened with *obongo*, dried mango seeds.

### Suya

Thin strips of beef are grilled on a metal stick over a charcoal fire on an iron grate. During grilling, the meat is seasoned liberally with groundnut oil squirted from a dishwashing liquid bottle. Spices, including paprika and cayenne pepper, are added. The beef is served in newspaper along with additional savory seasoning. The suya may be accompanied by *masa*, a spongy white dough made from fermented rice.

### Jollof Rice

Popular throughout West Africa, Jollof rice is basically long-grain white rice that is fried in oil (palm oil is common), then mixed with tomatoes and tomato paste, hot peppers, and other spices to make a hearty and hot accompaniment to meat and vegetable dishes.

### Plantains

Plantains are a kind of banana whose texture is very firm, and they are not sweet in flavor. Plantains are used as a starch around the world, Nigeria being no exception. They are prepared as a street food in several ways. As snacks, plantains are sliced and fried until crisp. Called *dodos*, or when served with other foods such as stews, *boli*, plantains are a staple of the Nigerian diet.



## Other Fried Treats

Hot oil is maintained at the roadside for immediate frying of street snacks. Favorites include *puff puff*, a light sweet dough that is rolled into 1-1/4-inch balls and then fried, and *kosai* or *akara* made from ground beans that are also rolled into 1-1/4-inch balls or made into small cakes and fried until crispy. Spices can be added to the batters to make them spicy.

## Corn

Whole corn cobs can be found in markets on streets and along roadsides roasting on open charcoal-fired grills. The corn is chewed carefully with little residual left on the cob. One way it is served on the streets of Lagos, the capital city, is with fresh coconut. Corn is also used by grinding it into a pulp, then frying it into fritters called *mosa*.

## Other Street Foods

### Snails and Tripe

Snails are eaten throughout Nigeria. Usually they are boiled in salted water, then removed from their shells, fried, and covered in a spicy red sauce. Fried plantain slices are the usual accompaniment. Tripe is also very popular through all of Nigeria. It is the stomach of an animal that is cleaned, boiled, and then fried and served with typical stew ingredients.

### Sugarcane

This is a popular snack, sold in cut segments of about 5 inches. The sugarcane is kept moist until consumption, then a mouthful is bitten off, the sweetness savored, and the starchy remnants spit on the ground by pushing them out of the mouth with the tongue.

### *Kunu*

*Kunu* is a fermented millet drink sold in plastic bags and especially popular in the northern part of the country. The buyer cuts off a corner of the bag and sucks the contents into the mouth. Similar drinks are made from wheat and called *Malta* from the German *malzbier*. Non-fermented drinks are made from mixing water with cornmeal and pounded cassava. They are very high in calories and carbohydrates, but filling for the many poor people of the country.

Nigeria is the largest consumer of sugar in Africa, much of it going to soft drinks. The usual international bottlers sell colas and other products familiar the world over. Local Nigerian companies make varieties of similar beverages. Fruit juices are popular though many of them are fortified with sugar.

*Bruce Kraig and Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya)

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North African street food in Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya has obvious similarities, but notable differences as well. The culinary landscapes of the three are similar in that the traditional ingredients that have been used for generations are incorporated into affordable dishes with a Mediterranean bent. For example, in both Tunisia and Algeria, the French influence is obvious in the prevalence of the French baguettes and pastries, which are used to encase everything from tuna and eggs to meats—all with traditional North African spices and mixtures. Libya's history as an Italian colony is reflected in many traditional Libyan foods that heavily feature pasta. *Rishda*, a thin handmade pasta, is one of the most popular, as well as *couscous*, which is made out of semolina flour.

*Harissa*, a spicy chili-based sauce, originated in Tunisia and Algeria, but is now found in all North African countries of the *Maghrib* (in Arabic: the "West," referring to countries that lie West of the Middle East), including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Street vendors who sell sandwiches, whether on a French baguette or in pita bread, are almost guaranteed to have *harissa* on hand. It is typically made with hot chili peppers (serrano peppers are commonly used), as well as cumin, garlic, lemon juice, coriander, red chili powder, caraway, and olive oil. Sometimes, the sauce is also made to have a smoky flavor, but the specific ingredients used and their proportions depend on the region where the food is being sold, as well as the vendor.



Selling dates at the market on the island of Djerba, Tunisia, Africa. (Irina Drazowa-Fischer/Dreamstime.com)

## Major Street Foods

### Tunisian Sandwiches: *Fricassée, Brik, and Kafteji*

One of the most popular Tunisian street foods is a rather sophisticated sandwich called the *fricassée*. The inspiration for the name is French, which literally means “fried and separated”—quite an accurate description for the sandwich itself. Rumor has it that the street vendors adopted the frying method in order to compensate for the lack of oven space needed to bake the coveted French baguettes. The dough is formed and fried in oil, then split and filled with boiled eggs, fish (usually tuna), green or black pitted olives, and figs. Of course, the composition of the *fricassée* varies based on the vendor making it, but the basic elements of the sandwich—eggs,

fish, and vegetables—are usually the same everywhere. Other possible ingredients include peppers, mayonnaise, pickled vegetables (particularly carrots), and chili sauces like *harissa*.

*Brik* is yet another dough-based street food widely available in Tunisia and Algeria; it has a thin flaky dough that is wrapped in a triangular formation to cover a variety of stuffings—then the whole thing is fried in vegetable oil until the shell crisps up. Popular stuffings include a mixture of egg and tuna, mashed potato and celery, or halal ground beef. Regardless of the stuffing used, egg is almost always included in the mixture—mainly as a congealing agent, but it also imparts a subtle savory taste. Various spices are also used to complement the flavors of the mixture, but often include capers, onions, lemon juice, olive oil, and parsley.

Another sandwich eaten by the poor in Tunisia, making it a ubiquitous street food, is *kafteji*. It is made by frying various vegetables—usually potatoes, tomatoes, onions, peppers, and pumpkins—separately, then mixing them with a beaten egg, and chopping up the mixture and adding it to a baguette. As with most street foods in this region, *harissa* or some fried hot peppers are often added to the sandwich for an extra kick.

### **Algerian *Karantita***

The *karantita* is a typical Algerian street food that originated in Algiers. It is made of some of the most widely available ingredients in the country: bread and chickpeas. Cheap and filling, the sandwich is sold everywhere—in front of schools, in cafes, and on street corners. *Karantita* (or *kalinti* in Moroccan dialect) is derived from the Spanish word *caliente* meaning “hot” and *torta* meaning “pie.” Chickpea flour (the unroasted variety) is mixed with eggs, water, oil, salt, and cumin and baked until the top is a golden brown. The mixture, seasoned with spicy *harissa* sauce and sprinkled with cumin, is eaten as a stand-alone pie in the west of Algeria, but in other parts of the country, the savory mixture is stuffed into a French-style baguette and served to hungry passersby.

### ***Rishda* (Libyan Pasta Dish)**

Libya’s street-food presence is scarcer as compared with the other North African countries, largely because more than 90 percent of the country is covered in desert. It doesn’t feature nearly as many pastries and French breads, but the Italian influence is obvious in the popular pasta dish known as *rishda*. Thin handmade noodles made of flour and water are cooked with tomatoes, onions, and chickpeas and flavored with paprika, cinnamon, and turmeric.

### ***Bsisa* (Ground Roasted Barley Cereal)**

*Bsisa*, colloquially in Arabic meaning “mashed,” refers to a North African dish made of out of roasted barley flour, which is ground with spices. Some of the most popular spices used with *bsisa* include fenugreek (in Arabic, *helba*), aniseed, and cumin. Popular in Tunisia, Algeria, and Libya, *bsisa* is usually eaten as a breakfast food or as a snack, and has historically been used as a snack food by travelers and Bedouins, because it is packed with nutrition and doesn’t spoil easily. In the east of Libya, sometimes wheat flour is used instead of barley flour to make *bsisa*. A version of *bsisa* called *howira* can be mixed with milk or water and a good amount of drink and made into a thick drink called *rowina*. Alternatively, the flour is mixed with olive oil and eaten with dried dates or figs as a snack. It is also paired with *halwa shamiya*, or sweetened sesame seed butter, on top.

### ***Lablabi* (Tunisian Soup)**

*Lablabi* is a Tunisian stew available in street carts for cheap; it is made with the affordable base ingredient chickpeas in a strongly seasoned, aromatic soup flavored with garlic, cumin, *harissa*, salt, pepper, lime juice, and olive oil. Stale bread that has hardened is dropped into the hot soup to add a crunch to each bite. Sometimes,

a raw or lightly boiled egg is added to the hot soup and stirred in. Other toppings include tuna, olives, and scallions.

*Heba Saleh*

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## Norway

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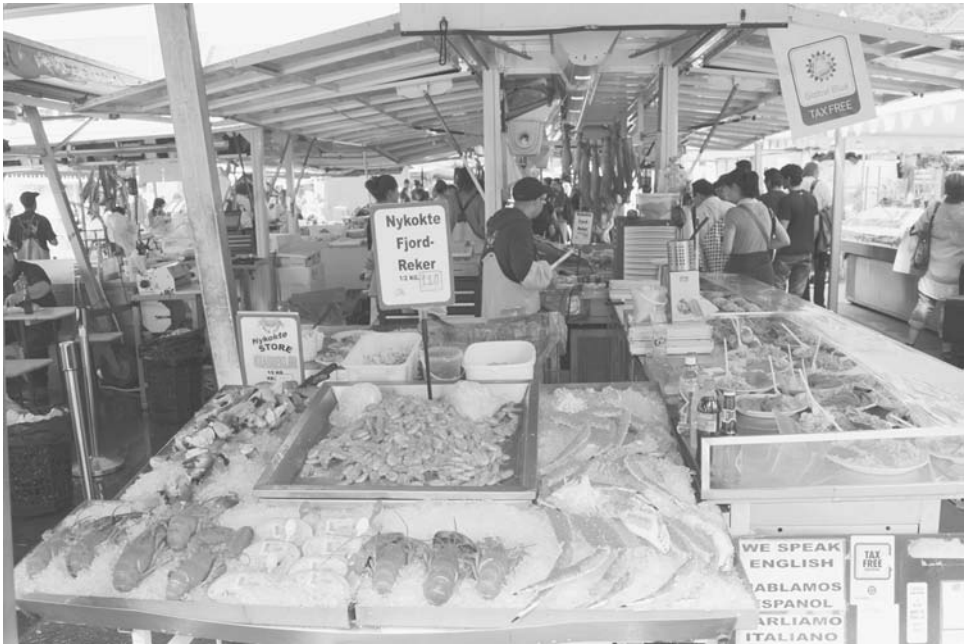
Norway is a mountainous country with only small areas of arable land along the coast and in the valleys. The coastline is long, with fjords cutting deep into the land. The Gulf Stream provides a better climate than could otherwise be expected in a northern country. Still, the growing season is short, and the soil is unproductive during much of the year.

Transport along the coast and to inland areas used to be difficult for much of the year. This made it necessary to rely on conserving food for later use. Farm animals were usually slaughtered in the autumn: the meat would keep better during the cold season. The harvesting of foods from the ocean, lakes, forests, and mountains was also seasonal. Fish, game, and wild berries had to be conserved for use during the rest of the year.

The concept of street food is little known in Norway. The term *gatemat*, a literal translation, is in use on the Internet, but it is almost exclusively used to describe street food in foreign countries. No foods are exclusively street foods. More often, these foods will be classified as either *hurtigmat* (fast food) or *gatekjøkkenmat* (street kitchen food), but both terms include foods eaten in a simple restaurant and even takeaway food.

Eating meals at home is the rule. When going to work or to school, everyone, from schoolchildren to managing directors, used to bring a packed lunch, a *matpakke*, consisting of paper-wrapped slices of buttered bread with spreads like cheese, ham, or pork liver paste. The packed lunch is still common, but is gradually replaced by canteen food. Both the abundance of packed lunches and a rather cold climate may be reasons why street food does not have a long tradition in Norway.

The first hot dog carts and vendors arrived from Germany early in the 20th century. Other foods and ways of selling them were imported in the 1950s and 1960s,



Seller at a fish market in Bergen, Norway. (Ivan Tykhy/Dreamstime.com)

mostly from the United States, including street kitchens, snack bars, and grills. Pizza restaurants followed in the 1970s and hamburger restaurants in the 1980s.

Fish and chips were an early import from the United Kingdom, but never caught on to the same extent. However, *Fishan-bua* in Kristiansund, whose most popular food is *fishan* (fish and chips), may well be the oldest still existing street-food venue in Norway. It was established in 1950 and still goes on, though with new owners and in a new location.

Baked goods are generally not considered street food or fast food with a few exceptions. *Skoleboller* or *skolebrød* (literally school buns or bread) are large sweet buns with icing, grated coconut, and a custard eye. These are sometimes known locally under different names like *12-øres* (named after the original price) in Kristiansand or *purker* (literally sows) in Arendal. A healthier and very popular choice is to buy a basket of fresh strawberries or sweet cherries when they are in season.

Young people eat street food and other fast food more frequently than adults. Thirty percent of young Norwegians say that they eat in such places at least once a month. Only a few percent do so more than once a week. However, young people, especially girls, are gradually becoming more health conscious and avoid this kind of food. Healthier choices also appear more frequently on the menus of fast-food outlets.

Both production and sales of street foods tend to be moving away from the streets. More and more products come ready-made from an industrial producer and are simply heated up by the retailer. Small independent vendors are disappearing and being replaced by chain outlets with a wider range of products, where street foods are just a small portion of their sales. The international chain 7-Eleven has more than 100 outlets in Norway. Deli de Luca is a more upmarket Norwegian chain with 28 shops so far. Gas stations today are small stores with a large selection of groceries and a wide variety of hot dogs, hamburgers, pizza, and other fast-food items.

The Norwegian Food Safety Authority, *Mattilsynet*, is the governmental body responsible for the safety of food and drinking water. Norway is not a member of the European Union (EU), but is required to adopt much of the EU legislation due to our participation in the European Economic Area. There are three main regulations founded on the Norwegian food act, *matloven*. These are the regulations on internal control (*internkontrollforskriften*), the regulation on the production of and trade in foodstuffs (*forskrift for produksjon og omsetning av næringsmidler*), and the regulation on food hygiene (*næringsmiddelhygieneforskriften*).

## Major Street Foods

### Hot Dogs

Hot dogs, *varme pølser*, are most often served on a bun, *pølse i brød*. Or you may have it rolled up in a thin soft bread instead, *pølse i lompe*. A local variation in Moss, a coastal city, is to serve the hot dogs in a sweet waffle, *pølse i vaffel*. Various kinds of sausages are on offer, the most popular being wiener and grilled sausages. A variety of toppings and condiments are available. Some people like ketchup and/or mustard only, others ask for raw onions, fried (soft or crispy) onions, or cucumber relish. More unusual is *rekesalat*, a salad of shrimps and chopped vegetables in mayonnaise.

### Kebab

Kebab has become very popular in recent years. Kebab in Norway most often means döner kebab or shawarma. Usually ground meat or even mechanically separated meat rather than slices of whole meat is put on the spit. Lamb, beef, or chicken is the preferred meat. In eastern Norway, the kebab is served in a pita bread; in western Norway, it is wrapped in a thin soft bread, called *rullekebab*. The main salad ingredients are Chinese cabbage, cucumber, onion, and sweet corn, dunked in tomato and chili dressing, sour cream and garlic, or both.

## Ice Cream

Despite the cool climate, ices are popular as street food—perhaps because Norwegians like to celebrate the arrival of warmer spring days with something cold. Soft serve, *softis*, is particularly popular on the street. You can have it in a cone or in a cup, with a choice of different toppings. Any number of other ices are also available: ice creams and fruit ices; on a stick, in a cone, or in a paper cup; plain, with strawberry, chocolate, or lots of other flavors.

## Other Street Foods

### Fish Cakes

*Fiskekaker* are pan fried cakes made from fish forcemeat. Most often they are made with saithe (*Pollachius virens*) or haddock (*Melanogrammus aeglefinus*), but many other kinds of fish can be used. *Fiskemat* is the generic term for fish forcemeat and the products made from it. The city of Bergen has had a number of shops specializing in *fiskemat*. Søstrene Hagelin is one of these, where people still pop in to buy a few fish cakes to eat on the go.

### Shrimp

Shrimp trawlers are a common sight in some coastal towns, and whenever possible, people take the opportunity to buy freshly cooked shrimp, *reker*, directly from the boat. There is no street food fresher and healthier than that.

### Waffles

Norwegian waffles, *vafler*, are made in a round waffle iron where each waffle easily separates into five heart-shaped pieces, *vaffelhjarter*. Waffles are eaten with a topping of butter, sour cream, and/or jam.

*Ove Fosså*

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# P

## Pakistan

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The Islamic Republic of Pakistan was created in 1947 when British India was divided into two countries: India, a secular state with a Hindu majority, and Pakistan, an Islamic state with a Muslim majority. It originally consisted of West and East Pakistan, but in 1971, East Pakistan declared its independence and became the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Like India, Pakistan consists of different ethnic groups and languages, each with their own culinary traditions. The major ethnic groups are Sindhis, Punjabis, Pushtuns, Baluchis, Mohajirs (descendants of Urdu-speaking Indians), and smaller tribal groups. The largest city, Karachi, with a population of 18 million attracts people from all over the country and has the remnants of a once thriving Chinese community.

For thousands of years, the subcontinent shared a common history, so it is not surprising that there are a great many gastronomical similarities between Pakistan and its neighbors, especially North India and Afghanistan. The cuisine of Pakistan's Mujahirs, with its rich, aromatic *biryanis*, *pulaos*, and *kormas*, is virtually identical to the food in such Indian cities as Lucknow or New Delhi, which have large Muslim populations. Thus, there are very few dishes that are exclusive to Pakistan, and this is true when it comes to street food. A major difference is ingredients. Pork is forbidden to Muslims, while many Hindus and Sikhs, only small numbers of whom live in Pakistan, do not eat beef or are vegetarian. Moreover, food in Pakistan tends to be much more meat based than that in India, at least for those who can afford it. The spicing also tends to be stronger and more aromatic.

Most street-food vendors in Pakistan are male (often with very young boys as assistants). They sell their wares from pushcarts called *thailas*, some of which are elaborately decorated, or at roadside stands, which may have tables and chairs outside. The food is cooked over coals or propane-fueled burners on enormous *tawas* or *karahis*, concave pans that may be several feet in diameter. Some street-food stands are actually an extension of existing shops that move onto the pavement or road to attract more customers. As in India, these establishments are called *dhabas*.

In the winter, breakfast is a popular street food meal in Pakistan, especially steaming hot *nihari*—a stew made by slowly cooking pieces of beef, beef tongue, brain, or shanks overnight with ginger and chilies. Another breakfast dish is *hal-eem*, which probably originated in Central Asia or Iran. It has many variations but

## Street Food Markets

Pakistan's most famous street food area is Gawalmandi (Food Street) in the ancient city of Lahore, which is open 24/7 except during Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, when all food establishments are closed from sunrise to sunset. At night, this and other districts are thronged with people who order their

dishes at one of many stalls while sitting at a chair and table. Although it is Pakistan's largest city, Karachi had no equivalent until mid-2011 when the Port Grand Street Food complex opened on the seashore. This upscale complex has dozens of vendors selling street food, arts and crafts, and fashion.

generally includes cracked wheat, lentils, spices, and pieces of beef or mutton. It is cooked for seven or eight hours over coals or a low heat, stirring constantly until a smooth paste is formed and then garnished with crispy fried onions, ginger, and green chilies. Because of their high nutritional content, both dishes are eaten when breaking the Ramadan fast, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar when people fast from dawn to dusk.

In the summer, when the temperature can reach 110°F or even higher, cold fruit juice and frozen sweet dishes are universal favorites. Roasted or boiled corn sprinkled with lime juice and chili powder is served year-round, as are fresh seasonal fruits.

As in India, small stands selling *paan* (chopped betel nut, spices, and mineral lime rolled in a betel leaf) are found in every street and market. In Lahore's Anarkali Bazaar, there is even a separate street called *paan gali* dedicated to this popular snack and after-meal digestif.

## Major Street Foods

*Chaat* (from a word meaning to lick) is the general term for a wide variety of fried spicy vegetarian snacks. One of the most popular is *channa chaat*—a mixture of boiled chickpeas, potatoes, green chilies, onions, and tomatoes, topped with tamarind chutney, sweet chutney, spicy yogurt, and *chaat masala*—a spice mixture that is unique to each vendor but may contain ground coriander and cumin seeds, dried red chilies, black pepper, black salt, and sour mango powder. A variation is *papri chaat*, crispy fried wafers served with boiled potatoes, boiled chickpeas, chilies, yogurt, and tamarind chutney, and topped with chaat masala.

*Dahi vada* (also called *dahi bhalley*) are sweet-and-sour balls made of black lentils (*urad dal*) soaked in water overnight, ground with ginger and other spices, deep-fried, then covered with yogurt and sprinkled with cumin powder, chaat masala, and a sweet-and-sour tamarind chutney. Fruit chaat is a medley of such fruits as tangerines, bananas, pomegranate, and guavas, seasoned with sugar and spices.

When composed only of guava and bananas, it is called *kutchaloo*. *Pani puri* or *gol gappa* is made by filling hollow puris (crispy round wafers fried until they are crisp) with chickpeas and a watery mixture of tamarind and chilies.

Of Gujarati origin, *bhelpuri* is a universal favorite throughout South Asia and abroad. Each vendor adds his own special twist, but most recipes include puffed rice, *sev* (deep-fried wheat noodles), onions, and diced, boiled potatoes, topped with a brown sweet-and-sour chutney made of dates and tamarind and a green spicy one with coriander leaves and chilies.

## Samosas

Samosas, which may have originated in the Middle East, have been a popular snack in the subcontinent for many centuries. A samosa is a fried, triangular-shaped dough pastry with a savory filling, which may be ground meat (mutton or chicken) or potatoes and peas and served with assorted chutneys. The most common are made of coriander, mint, and chilies; tomato and sugar; and tamarind.

## Pakoras

*Pakoras* are especially popular during Ramadan and in the rainy season. Bite-sized pieces of vegetables—eggplants, potatoes, okra, onion, spinach, or pretty much



Samosas, baked or fried pastries filled with meat or vegetables, are a popular street food throughout the Indian subcontinent. This stall in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, is crowded with Muslims about to break their fast during Ramadan. (AP Photo/B.K.Bangash)

anything—are deep-fried in a batter of spiced chickpea flour and served with a runny ketchup.

## Kebabs

Meat kebabs are a universally popular dish, and the kebabwallah (kebab maker) grilling pieces of meat on long skewers over a grill or in a portable tandoor is a familiar sight on Pakistani streets. They are always served with bread and various chutneys. Breads can be leavened or unleavened and are made from whole wheat or white flour. The most common cooking techniques are baking in a tandoor (*naan*, *tandoori roti*), sautéing in oil or ghee on a tawa (*paratha*), or cooking on a hot pan without oil (*chapati*). The customer breaks off a little piece of bread with his or her right hand, wraps it around the meat, dips it in a chutney, and pops it in his or her mouth.

Each region has its own varieties, but some are universally popular, including the following:

- *Seekh kebab*, spiced minced meat threaded on long flat skewers and grilled
- *Shami kebab*, a small patty of minced beef or chicken and ground chickpeas and sautéed
- *Tikka kebab*, cubes of meat (often chicken) marinated in yogurt and spices
- *Bihari kebab*, strips of spiced beef threaded on skewers
- *Boti kebab*, chunks of meat, often chicken, marinated in lemon juice and spices and grilled on skewers

Bun kebabs, a local version of burgers, are sold at roadside kiosks and pushcarts. Minced meat, either mutton or beef, is spiced with cumin and chili and formed into a patty, fried, topped with a fried egg, onions, and an assortment of chutneys, and served between charred buns. A vegetarian version is made from mashed potato.

A popular roadside dish imported by Pakistanis who worked in the Persian Gulf is *shawarma*, made of shaved meat surrounding a spit that rotates around a burner and is sliced off as needed. It is usually served with *naan*.

## Takatak/Kat-a-Kat

Originally called *tawa gurda kapoora*, which means kidneys and testicles in a tawa, the name was changed to the more respectable takatak, which refers to the sound made by the cook as he chops the organs with sharp knives in a regular rhythm while cooking them. (See the video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-X1kpFn3rg>). He keeps slicing, dicing, and frying until the mixture becomes a thick curry.

The customer can choose which organs he or she wants to include in his or her dish. It is served with mint chutney.

### **Chicken *Karahi/Karahi Gosht***

A specialty of Lahore's Food Street, this dish is made by stir-frying pieces of chicken with tomatoes, green chilies, ginger, and garlic in a *karahi*, the wok-like pan that gives the dish its name. The diner mops up the juice with pieces of naan. A variation is *karahi gosht*, made with mutton. This dish may have been the precursor of the popular British dish *balti*.

### **Sugarcane Juice**

Sometimes called the national drink of Pakistan, sugarcane juice, or *roh*, is pressed from sticks of cane by roadside vendors. It is always sold fresh, since it quickly blackens from oxidation. It is served in glasses with or without ice.

### **Regional Street Foods**

A famous street food of the Northwestern state of Baluchistan and its capital Quetta is *sajji*, a leg of lamb that is salted and mildly spiced and roasted over an open fire until it is tender. It has become very popular throughout Pakistan. It is served with *kaak*, a rock-hard bread, and a yogurt salad.

Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province is the home of chicken *charga*, whole chicken marinated with yogurt, ghee, and spices, placed on a skewer and roasted over coals or in a tandoor, and served with bread. Another dish that originated in this region is *chapli* kebabs, which have become popular all over Pakistan and India. Minced beef or water buffalo is flavored with coriander seeds, onions, cumin seeds, and chilies, held together with chickpea flour or cornmeal, as a binding agent, formed into flat patties (the name means sandal) and fried in animal fat (sometimes the fat rendered from the tail of a fat-tailed sheep). Traditionally, they are eaten with naan but in modern times can be put between slices of toast or a roll.

In the seaport city of Karachi, *machli ke kebab*, or fish kebabs are popular. Fish fillets are marinated in yogurt, ginger-and-garlic paste, and spices, shaped into kebabs, skewered and grilled or baked.

### ***Nimco***

This word is actually a brand name dating back to the early 1950s that has entered into the language to describe a wide range of crunchy snacks sold by many vendors. They include *chevda*, puffed rice mixed with peanuts, curry leaves, and other spices; fried spiced lentils, spicy salted peanut, and potato chips, *ghatia* (fried strips of chickpea dough), and many other varieties.

## Sweets

A universal favorite are jalebis, spirals of spiced chickpea batter drizzled through holes in a spoon into boiling oil, deep-fried until they are golden, then dipped in a sugar syrup and sometimes flavored with saffron, rosewater, or cardamom.

A popular frozen summertime sweet is *kulfi* made of thickened sweetened milk that is frozen in small cone-shaped molds. Traditional flavorings are saffron, cardamom, almond, pistachio, mango, and rosewater; modern variations include apple, avocado, and strawberry. Unlike Western ice creams, *kulfi* is not whipped so that it is hard and dense. In Pakistan, it is served with *falooda*, thin noodles that are boiled, simmered in milk, and cooled over ice. Western ice cream is also available.

*Gola ganda* is a local version of a snow cone, a paper cone filled with crushed or shaved ice and topped with flavored sugar water and sometimes condensed milk.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Papua New Guinea

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Papua New Guinea (PNG) was formed after World War II from the merger of the Territory of Papua (formerly a British colony transferred to Australian administration in 1905) and German New Guinea. Australia continued to administer the country till its independence in 1975. Taking up half of the island of New Guinea, it is located in the Melanesian region of the Pacific.

Most people are of Papuan or Melanesian descent, and there are small populations of Chinese, Fijian Indian, Australians, Europeans, and Americans. Just more than 80 percent live in rural and remote areas in villages.

Foodways in PNG reflect this demography. The basic food profile is similar to that of Melanesia. The staples are starchy vegetables and fruits such as taro, cassava (manioc), yam, plantain, *kaukau* (sweet potato), and sago. Rice and breads are now also regularly eaten as part of the starch component. Accompanying the starch are *kumu* (green leafy indigenous and imported vegetables), Asian and European vegetables and fruits, indigenous meats such as *cuscus* opossum or tree kangaroo, chicken, river and ocean fish, shellfish, and crustaceans. Pigs are reserved for bride price and for ceremonial feasts. Imported lamb flaps, a fatty offcut

from the ribs, have become a major source of meat with unhealthy effects. Salt is the main seasoning, followed by stock cubes. Western fast food (roasted and fried chicken, burgers, deep-fried potato chips, pizza, highly sugared carbonated drinks) has made inroads into the diet, particularly in urban communities also with unhealthy results.

In rural and remote areas, food is cooked over wood fires—on improvised metal grills, boiled or fried in saucepans—or in the ashes. Town dwellers use electric cooking ranges supplemented by outdoor wood fires.

Street food is an extension of these foodways. Most is sold in the informal economy, the substantial unregulated sector in PNG in which individuals and families sell goods directly from the front of their house, in markets, or at roadside stalls.

## Major Street Foods

### Market Food

This is the longest established style of street food and includes tapioca or sago wrapped and steamed in banana leaves (sometimes with a banana); grilled fish; bunches of peanuts on the stem; other nuts like *galip* (canarium); fruit; and *kulau* (young coconut from which to drink coconut water). Scones or buns have become popular in recent times.

### Lunch Packets

Developed specifically for urban clerical, service, and industrial workers who cannot return home for midday meals, these are usually a prepackaged small Styrofoam tray of boiled rice with fish or chicken, a boiled starchy root, boiled leafy green vegetables, and slices of fresh carrot and onion or an *igir*—a mix of vegetables and fish or chicken cooked in coconut milk served on a banana leaf in an aluminum foil parcel.

### Roadside Food

This is a relatively recent development to provide snacks for long-haul transport drivers and the constant stream of people traveling between villages on public motor vehicles. The main roadside foods are boiled corn on the cob, grilled starchy roots and fruit (*taro*, *kaukau*, plantain), grilled lamb flaps and saveloys (a spicy red-colored sausage), boiled eggs in their shell, peanuts, and Western fast food. Carbonated soft drinks have become the beverage of choice on the road.

*Paul van Reyk*



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## The Philippines

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The Philippines is an archipelago nation of 7,107 islands. The islands' 22,549 miles of coastline (36,289 km), mountain ranges, five volcanoes, river basins, and lakes sit astride the Pacific Rim's southwestern edge. Scientists disagree on the geological genesis of the Philippines: volcanic activity, tectonic shifts, or Ice Age melts submerging land bridges to the west or from present-day Taiwan are some of the theories. Though historians disagree on who they were, the first humans settled at least 67,000 years ago.

One of the 180 indigenous ethnic groups of the Philippines, the *Ifugao*, built the Banaue Rice Terraces 2,000 years ago, steppes carved out of the Cordillera Mountains on the island of Luzon that maximized and irrigated flat, arable land for rice. Like many other Asian cultures, the major food staple of Philippines was and is rice.

Since the third century CE, a number of independent cooperative societies similar to city-states developed in the present-day Philippine Islands and traded with their counterparts in Indonesia and Malaysia, China, and others. The Philippines shares many culinary touch points with these ancient trading partners, the traces of which can be seen in today's street food.

In pursuit of trade routes, Spain first made contact with the inhabitants when Ferdinand Magellan discovered the Islands in 1521. Naming the nation after their king, Spain colonized the Philippines for 400 years. The Viceroyalty of New Spain, present-day Mexico, administered the Philippines until the former gained independence from Spain in 1821. The 250-year galleon trade between Acapulco and Manila—17,000 miles apart—brought the Philippines new agricultural products from Latin America: corn, tomatoes, potato, cotton, and tobacco.

The Filipinos rebelled against their Spanish overlords in 1898, but after the Spanish American War, they became a Commonwealth of the United States. In 1946, the Philippines gained its independence from the United States. English became one of the official languages, and many Filipinos are fluent in it. Ties between the United States and the Philippines have remained very strong, partly because some 9 million Filipinos, or 10 percent of the population, emigrated to seek employment in other countries, especially the United States. As a result, American foods have influenced Filipino street food.

Filipino culture is much like its own beloved dessert, halo-halo, a multilayered combination of crushed or shaved ice, condensed milk, chopped local fruits like langka (jackfruit) or macapuno (young coconut strips), and sweet beans, topped

with a sumptuous helping of ube (purple yam) ice cream, or slices of leche flan, a Spanish-derived milk custard. Its name translates literally in English to “mix-mix,” describing how this dessert is enjoyed. The result is a unique, satisfying concoction whose sum is greater than the value of its individual components. The Philippines’s culinary heritage is a mix of spices, sauces, preparation and preservation technology, and methods and ingredients both local and borrowed.

Everyone is a street-food patron in the Philippines. For most of Filipino society, street food is subsistence: convenient and inexpensive food that will get one through the day. Street food can be an energy boost or a refreshing snack on the long, hot, and arduous commute. The Philippines’s tropical climate, paralyzing urban traffic, and varying comfort levels of public transportation make travel difficult. Located near public transport hubs and busy intersections, vendors offer food and drink to commuters, drivers, and conductors.

During workday lunches, office workers can get street food delivered to their desks by their favorite vendors, which is more convenient than bringing lunch from home and less expensive than eating at a restaurant. As the largest English-speaking country in Asia, many multinationals have based their outsourced business process operations and call centers in Manila. Guess where workers can get a hot meal while on break from answering customers’ calls in the middle of the night? Organized by local municipalities and tourism boards, temporary street-food centers in large tents in adjacent parking lots cater to these third-shift night workers.

Street food can be enjoyed from home. In some residential areas, vendors ply their wares during mealtimes or at *merienda*, the afternoon snack time, from 3:00 to 5:00 P.M. The vendors might ring a bell, toot a horn, or yell to residents the name of the food they’re selling as they walk by.

Outside the home, Filipinos eat street food outside the church in the plaza post-Sunday Mass, near the open-air wet and dry marketplaces, in and around the malls, or while strolling around parks. Street foods are also a fixture during *fiesta* time, seasonal celebrations, or on saints’ feast days. Street food also nourishes those who can’t cook for themselves because they don’t have kitchens: university students living away from home in dormitories, travelers on long bus rides to the provinces, and family visiting loved ones in the hospital. For the poorest of the poor, street food like *pagpag*, or resold food scraps culled from trash bags thrown out by restaurants, is the only food affordable and available for squatters and the destitute living in makeshift refuges like Payatas, the capitol’s garbage dump.

An estimated 50,000 hawkers cook and sell street food in Manila alone. Street-food vendors are entrepreneurs, finding a living with a trade that will support them and their families. Few are professionally trained at culinary schools or have work experience at restaurants. More often, vendors cultivate their skill for food preparation at home. Street-food ingredients are inexpensive and readily accessible at open-air dry or wet markets called *palengke*. Merchants prepare and par-cook fresh

ingredients at home, then finish cooking at the point of sale. A common question customers ask vendors is, “*Bagong luto ho ba ito?*” or, “Is this newly cooked?” Some vendors also offer frozen or packaged food that can be quickly prepared—like *pancit ramen* (ramen noodles).

Trade secrets, largely, do not exist when it comes to Filipino street food. Though specific provinces are known for particular foods, the basic recipes and preparation methods for street food are commonly known. What distinguishes one vendor from another are the proportions, combinations, cleanliness, and the quality of the ingredients. Over time, vendors develop trusting relationships with their regular customers, or *suki*.

Since no national policy exists on the regulation of street foods, regulation and enforcement fall on the local municipalities, resulting in uneven quality of street food. On the lesser-regulated side of street-food vending, vendors build their own stalls, carts, retrofitted public utility *jeepneys* or carrying implements. They set up where other vendors have already established a presence in order to avoid trouble with authorities. In other municipalities, vendors may be required to acquire security clearances and permits; to undergo ongoing training on food sanitation and regulations; and to submit to random visits and product testing. Some markets assign each vendor a stall that may include access to clean water and waste disposal. In these municipalities, local authorities have better control, enforcement capability, and working relationships with the vendors. Vendors may be organized into unions or cooperatives. Vendors may also have access to uniforms or microcredit nongovernmental organizations. Street-food franchises are a popular entrepreneurial route. Consumers are very conscientious of brands, advertising, and perceived quality, safety, and consistency. Franchises dominate the food industry with professionally designed signs and consistent appearance.

## Major Street Foods

### Chicken, Duck, and Other Fowl

#### *Balut*

Of all the fowl-derived street food, the most famous—or, better *infamous*—is the *balut*. *Balut* is considered to be a native Filipino delicacy; for some, it’s an aphrodisiac, or a rite of passage given to newcomers to the Philippines. *Balut* are boiled duck embryos incubated for 17–22 days. Depending on one’s taste for doneness, a consumer chooses a younger or older *balut*. The older the *balut*, the more mature the embryo (*sisiw*): firmer formed bones, beak, and feathers. From the *balutan* (duck hatchery), vendors buy batches of embryos and cook them at home. What the vendors boil the *balut* in—clean water, vinegar, soy sauce, or any flavorings—is

what distinguishes one's product. To avoid waste, hatcheries also sell *penoy* and *abnoy* at lower prices. A *penoy* is a *balut* egg that did not become fertilized and is without decomposition. An *abnoy* is a *penoy* that has some decomposition and, despite its foul smell, is still cooked into scrambled eggs.

### ***Kwek-Kwek***

Other fowl-related street foods include *kwek-kwek*, deep-fried quail eggs, hard-boiled and coated with a slightly piquant and distinctly orange batter. Its larger chicken or duck egg counterpart is called *tokneneng*. Day-old chick (which has no Tagalog name) is a duckling that is deep-fried and sometimes served whole skewered with a toothpick or snipped into pieces, and served with vinegar and chopped onions.

### ***Isaw: Barbeque***

The capital, Manila, is approximately 1,006 miles (1,620 km) north of the equator. For a nation with a temperate climate where the weather is usually warm enough to cook outside—and in fact, many times, it's too hot to cook inside comfortably—barbequing outdoors over hot coals or open flames is a common and inexpensive food preparation method.

The meats used for *Isaw*, or barbeque, aren't just skewered chicken cutlets or pork chops. Street vendors make use of every part of the animal for barbequing—often the most inexpensive parts. (People joke about supposed cuts of chicken or pork actually being stray dog or cat. So sometimes people prefer *isaw* that is easily distinguishable in form.) Vendors have commonly adopted amusingly descriptive names for each one. Chicken intestine accordioned around the skewer is called IUD (intrauterine device). Congealed gelatinous chicken's blood formed into small, dark rectangles is called Betamax. Deep-fried chicken feet, talons and all, are Adidas. And finally, there's Helmet, or deep-fried whole chicken head.

### **Processed Meats: Meatballs and Siomai**

The Philippines has a long tradition of native butchery knowledge and of processed meat technology from the Spanish *longganisa*, Mexican *chorizo*, and the American hot dog. In a street-food context, processed meats usually take the form of meatballs. A major producer and exporter of seafood, the Philippines's food industry, along with those in other Asian seafood markets, developed value-added processes to make use of the great volume of valuable yet initially undesirable seafood by-products. Meatballs—made of squid or fish meats—are a common street food, enjoyed after deep-fried skewers are dipped in any combination of soy-, vinegar-, or

chili-based sauces, with garnishes that might include chopped onions, tomatoes, herbs, or peppers.

*Siomai* are a clear culinary export of the Chinese, long-time traders with the natives from pre-Hispanic times. The Chinese-Filipino community has a still-thriving enclave in the capitol called Binondo. Descended straight out of a *dim sum* cart, *siomai* are steamed, wonton-wrapped, pork and shrimp meat dumplings. Vendors can purchase frozen bundles of *siomai* inexpensively at any market or grocery store. After steamed, *siomai* are served with soy sauce. Mass transit stations across Metro Manila are not complete without a *siomai* stands. These stands also sometimes sell steamed *siopao*, commonly known in China as *baozi*, or rice flour buns stuffed with cooked meats and sauces.

## Rice-Based Foods

There is a litany of street-food desserts based on rice, rice flour, or ground glutinous rice, or *kakanin*. Some of these can be enjoyed only during the lead-up to and including the Christmas celebration on December 25. (Though in some communities, these Christmas-time desserts are available during the entire Christmas season—September through December—or even all year-round.) The Filipino Catholic church observes *Misa de Gallo*, or Rooster’s Mass, a 4:00 A.M. mass held daily for nine days leading up to Christmas. To warm up mass-goers during the cooler early morning hours, vendors peddle *bibingka* and *puto bumbong* in the plaza in front of or around the church.

### *Bibingka*

*Bibingka* is a rice cake cooked in banana leaves, made of *galapong* (milled glutinous sweet rice dough), coconut milk, margarine, and sugar. The cakes are baked in special ovens, which cook both top and bottom and are served with *nuyog*, or grated coconut meat. Special versions of *bibingka* feature strips of savory cheese or hard-boiled salted eggs baked into the cakes. Like *bibingka*, *puto bumbong*, too, is based on *galapong*. *Puto bumbong*’s distinct violet appearance comes from a purple glutinous rice (*pirurutong*) or food coloring in its absence. The rice is steamed inside bamboo casings (*bumbong*).

### *Pandesal*

*Pandesal* means salt bread, but they are actually slightly sweet, wheat-flour-based bread rolls, peddled far afield from the bakeries by street vendors. The beauty of *pandesal* is in its versatility; it can be eaten on its own or buttered, taken with morning coffee, served in homemade sandwiches with savory leftovers or eaten with ice cream.

## ***Taho***

In the morning, vendors can be heard calling out, “*Taho!*” to tempt residents with the soft tofu with tapioca pearls in syrup. Merchants, usually men, sell *taho* from two large aluminum cylinders tied to either end of a thick wooden plank or stick balanced on their shoulders. One bucket contains the tofu, and the other the tapioca pearls and syrup.

## **Saba**

Saba (banana) is set on a long skewer and deep-fried. The coating caramelizes and is finished with a sprinkling of brown sugar. It is eaten hot from the frying pan.

## **Fruit on a Stick**

Competing with meat-on-sticks: fruits on sticks. The Philippines grows 91 varieties of bananas, varied in sweetness and consistency. The banana cue are skewered, peeled bananas, which when barbequed forms an outer crunchy, caramelized crust.

## **Corn on the Cob**

While not nearly as elaborate as Mexican *elotes*, corn or *mais* is simply prepared either boiled on the cob or barbequed in the husk.



Fried banana, one of the most common street foods in The Philippines. (Mtkang/Dreamstime.com)

## **Buko**

*Buko* (coconut) juice is served right out of the shell. Vendors wielding large knives skillfully chop off excess husk weight, leaving just a centimeter or two surrounding the coconut flesh and its juices intact within.

## **Ice Cream**

Sold by vendors from brightly painted wooden pushcarts, dirty ice cream, another misnomer, is locally produced ice cream. It comes in flavors like *ube* (purple yam), *macapuno* (young coconut), cheese, or corn.

*Sarahlynn Pablo*

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## **Poland**

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The Republic of Poland is bordered by Germany to the west; the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south; Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania to the east; and the Baltic Sea and Russia to the north. Over the centuries, the country has been divided and occupied by its more powerful neighbors, so that large sections were at various times part of Austria, Germany, and Russia. Poland gained its independence in 1919. After World War II, the country became Communist, but the Communist regime fell in 1989. Today Poland is a member of the European Union and enjoying an economic boom. With more than 2 million private farms, it is Europe’s leading producer of potatoes and rye and a major producer of sugar beets.

Poland’s position on the crossroads between East and West has influenced its cuisine, which shares features with those of Russia, Germany, Austria, and even France thanks to intermarriage between Polish and French aristocrats in the 17th and 18th centuries. Although some people equate Polish food with sausages (and indeed, the Poles have developed sausage-making to a fine art), vegetables,

especially salads, play an important role. Common ingredients include cabbage, carrots, beets, parsnips, potatoes, horseradish, grains such as groats (*kasza*) and barley, mushrooms, and berries. Flavoring may come from wild mushrooms, juniper berries, marjoram, and dill.

Traditionally, there has not been much street food in Poland. The Communist regime discouraged private enterprise, many ingredients were in short supply, and eating on the street was frowned on by middle-class people. However, this has changed, and in recent years, local and regional governments have even been promoting food as a tourist attraction by holding festivals for pierogi, cheese, sausage, and other regional items. At the 2007 Pierogi Festival in Cracow, for example, 30,000 pierogies were consumed each day.

Pierogies—small dumplings filled with meat, potatoes, mushrooms, cheese, vegetables, and fruits—are ubiquitous in Eastern Europe and considered Poland’s national dish. However, they are not usually sold as a street food but are rather eaten in restaurants or at home. In the United States, on the other hand, pierogies are a staple of street-food trucks in several cities.

## Major Street Foods

### Pastries

One of the most popular categories of street foods are pastries, sold from carts, kiosks with glass fronts, and bakeries. Poland has a rich tradition of pastry making that dates back to the first half of the 18th century when King August III brought pastry makers from France. Probably the most famous are *pączki* (pronounced *ponchki*, sometimes translated as doughnuts)—deep-fried balls of dough with a wide variety of fruit and cream fillings. They are traditionally eaten on the last Thursday before Ash Wednesday.

*Rurki z kremem* are long thin tubes of wafer-thin pastry filled with cream. *Gofry* (from the French *gaufre*) are Belgian-style waffles cooked on a griddle and topped with



Cheese cart featuring Poland’s famous Oscypek cheeses in Krupowki street in Zakopane, Poland. (Marekusz /Dreamstime.com)



fruit and cream. *Kolaczki* are small, square- or diamond-shaped pieces of dough-filled cream cheese, fruit, or even poppy seeds.

*Kremolki*, a derivative of the French pastry *napoleon*, are a specialty of the town of Wadowice, birthplace of Pope John Paul II. These cakes are made with a shortbread crust on the bottom, followed by a layer of golden custard cream, and topped with puff pastry. On a visit to Wadowice in 1999, the pope mentioned that as a boy he and his friends would put their money together to buy one of these cakes. Now it is sold everywhere in Wadowice under the name *kremowka papieska*, the papal cream cake.

### ***Zapiekanka***

A popular street food throughout Poland is *zapiekanka*, a baked open-faced sandwich that always contains sautéed mushrooms, melted cheese, and generous amounts of ketchup (and sometimes mayonnaise) in a sliced roll. It became popular under Communism when these ingredients were more readily available during a period of shortages. Today there are many varieties: Hawaiian (pineapple and barbecue sauce), gypsy (ham, sweet-and-sour sauce), diablo (bacon, pickled cucumber, spicy sauce), Greek (olives, feta cheese, mixed vegetables), and with fish, a popular home-made version is called “student’s *zapiekanka*,” which is made from bread, cheese, and whatever else is in the kitchen cupboard at the moment!

### ***Obwarzanek (Plural Obwarzanki)***

Sometimes termed the Polish pretzel or bagel (although this is a source of contention), this snack is particularly associated with the city of Kraków, where it is sold at nearly 200 street carts. *Obwarzanki* are wreath-shaped circles made from flour that are crispy on the outside and bready on the inside with a large hole in the middle. They can be sprinkled with salt, sesame or poppy seeds, spices, cheese, or onions. However, unlike their cousins, the bagels, they are not toasted or cut in half to make sandwiches. They are popular among students because of their low price, their availability at stalls near bus stops, outside college buildings, and on many street corners, and of their filling qualities. *Obwarzanki* were served at the royal Cracow court as early as the 15th century. The bread was baked originally during Lent.

Bagels are also sold in Poland and were also apparently invented in Kraków. Leo Rosten writes in *The Joys of Yiddish* that the first known mention of the word *bajgiel* was in the Community Regulations of the city of Kraków in 1610, which stated that the item was given as a gift to women in childbirth. Jewish immigrants from Poland brought it to the United States, where it is a characteristic dish of New York City.

*Döner kebabs*, sold in small kiosks and outside restaurants, are a popular late-night snack in Polish cities. Originally Turkish, they probably came from Germany

and are especially popular with British tourists. They consist of bread filled with grilled mutton, white cabbage, and a yogurt or spicy red sauce.

## Regional Specialties

*Oscypek* is a smoked cheese made of salted sheep's milk and up to 40 percent cow's milk that has been a specialty of the Tatra mountain region since the 15th century. The cheese is poured into artistically decorated spindle-shaped molds. *Oscypek* has been granted a regional designation by the European Union. It is sold directly by the farmers or by street vendors in Zakopane, a summer and winter resort town in the Tatras. It can be eaten cold or grilled and always accompanied by cranberries. A popular winter drink in Zakopane sold on the street is tea with rum.

Along the beaches of Poland's northern coast, holiday goers can enjoy freshly smoked fish, grilled sausages with sauerkraut, grilled pork shank, barbequed ribs, kebabs, and hot dogs sold by individual vendors or restaurants that prepare the dishes outside their stores.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Portugal

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Portugal is a country located along the eastern edge of Europe's Iberian Peninsula. It fronts on the Atlantic Ocean, and to the west and north is its only neighbor, Spain. Portugal is a country of 10 million people, small by world standards, but it has had an incalculable effect on world food because of its centuries-long world trade and its colonies, such as Brazil. Corn and chilies are just two of the food plants sent around the world by Portuguese merchants: both have changed world cuisines.

Portugal is a land of some geographical and climatic diversity. The coastal regions are temperate to even subtropical in low areas. The interior has mountains where skiing is a popular activity during wintertime. Some areas are hot and dry, but others have rolling plains and river valleys where agriculture is rich. One of these is the Douro River, where the climate is conducive to wine grapes, olives, and almonds. Portuguese wines from the valley *Vinho do Porto* are famous the world over and known as Port. Portugal's farmers grow products for the rest of Europe and, as a maritime nation, export lots of fish. Fresh vegetables, meats, and fish of various kinds all form the base of Portuguese cuisine and street food.

Street food in Portugal has a long tradition. There is evidence of street food being sold in Portugal since the 15th century, continuing on throughout to the present day. Beginning with Portugal's admission as a full member of the European Union in 1986, stringent food safety requirements associated with tougher protocols for issuing permits to street hawkers put extra demands on these small businesses. Nevertheless, a relaxed outdoor lifestyle and increased demand, especially from the tourist industry, have led to an increasing and renewed interest in making street food's revival promising and more vibrant than ever.

The Portuguese are renowned for their sweet tooth. The earliest evidence of street food in Portugal refers to hawkers selling honey lollipops (*caramilo*) to children in the streets of Évora in the late 1400s. Likewise, in the 18th and 19th centuries, there is evidence of female street vendors walking the streets of Lisbon selling different types of sweet street food such as small dried cakes (*linguas de sogra*), lollipops (*chupa-chupa*), nougat (*torrão de Alicante*), and rice pudding (*arroz doce*). Professional confectionary makers also sold sweet couscous and candied fruits in street stalls.

The long tradition of street food in Portugal reached its peak in the 19th century. An increased migration of rural populations into the large urban conglomerates promoted the establishment of street foods as a means of income for many individuals. Ambulatory vendors became a vibrant feature of the urban environment, especially in Lisbon. In summer, the city streets were animated by women selling fresh vegetables and fruits, eggs, and sweet fresh figs. Likewise, the freshwater hawker and the *varina* (female fresh fish vendor) became iconic figures of the city ethos. Their street-cries and routines are still an integral part of popular culture.

### People's Fairs

In June, Lisbon residents go to the streets to take part in the Festas Populares (The People's Feasts/Fairs). The fairs (*arraial*) take place in the old suburbs of Lisbon, where people dance and sing all night long as they eat *sardinhas assadas* and drink a glass of new red wine. They commemorate the city's patron—San Antonio. Over approximately one week, people enjoy the balmy nights, listen to popular and traditional music, and eat sardines. The smell of barbecued fresh

sardines can be detected from a distance. Small portable barbecue grills attended by one individual are in constant service in the narrow streets of the old suburbs of Alfama near the Castel de San Jorge, where the fat sardines are cooked over hot coals, which will be sold on a slab of bread and perhaps accompanied with a small side salad of fresh ripe tomatoes, lettuce, and onion, well seasoned with olive oil and white wine vinegar.

The *varina* represents the peasant women who migrated from rural areas to the urban center hoping for a better life. The *varina* sold her fresh fish—mainly sardines—to other street vendors, who would then cook them in small barbecues by the side of the street. The cooked fish (*sardinha assada*) would be sold on top of a slice of bread for 10 réis (15 cents in today's value). Nowadays, the *varina* has mostly disappeared, but Lisbon's picturesque suburbs, where the narrow alleyways still mirror the pathways of many centuries ago, were as recently as the 1970s still walked by these female street vendors.

Although barbecued fresh sardines have always been a favorite street food, other morsels have also constituted the foodways of urban everyday life. *Pastel de bacalhau* (codfish cakes) and *iscas-no-pão* (pan-fried liver steaks in bread rolls) were popular snacks among the male population who, on their way home from work, would stop for a quick bite accompanied by a glass of wine. The hawkers were mainly located in such provisional sites as small side-street spaces, where the counter would be the separator between the street and the vending space. Under these rudimentary conditions, customers ate their food while standing up and leaning against the counter.

More recently, other spaces were made available for snacking and street-food vending. Small business (cafes, *tascas*, *quiosques*, *esplanada*) constitute the backbone of an industry that populates large and small urban areas. A characteristic sight of Lisbon Harbour are the *quiosques* (kiosk) patronized by stevedores. Past and present maritime workers used them in their breaks for a quick snack, and a cold drink of wine (in the old days) and beer (more recently) as stay-dry policy during working hours has recently been implemented. Kiosks usually serve small savory foods such as *pastel de bacalhau* (codfish cake), *croquetes* (meat patties), *rissóis* (savory pastries), *bifanas* (steak sandwich), *cachorros* (hot dog), and *iscas* (pan-fried liver) on bread rolls. Mixed sandwiches are also popular.

## Cultural Habits and Ways of Life

In general, Portuguese do not have the habit of rushing their meals. People like eating out, but they don't like eating on the run. Rarely will you see Portuguese eating as they walk. In Portugal, people prefer to sit down or at least stand-up against a counter while they eat, even if it is only a sandwich, a small cake, or savory morsel. Currently, and despite tight working schedules, most employees are still allocated one hour for lunch. It is a ritual in everyone's daily lives. After 1:00 P.M., small cafes are populated by hungry customers. Some have their simple meal either standing up against the counter or sitting down on high stools by the counter. Their meals can be as simple as a plate of soup with bread, small portions of rice and duck, small pastries, or sandwiches. People handle the food with their hands or the food is served in takeaway dishes. Other customers prefer the comfort of sitting

down for a simple meal. One thing is for sure—everyone eats out at lunchtime. In fact, for some people, lunch is the only full meal they have, since busy working families have made the habit of having a complete meal at lunchtime and a lighter snack for dinner.

This lifestyle does not equate to high incomes or expensive meals. On the contrary, Portugal has one of the lowest per capita incomes in the European Union, and disposable income is also limited. The difference is that these everyday meals are inexpensive. A full meal with a drink and a *bica* (espresso coffee) can cost as much as 7–10 euros, which in some places would be the cost of a drink and a sandwich. It is an economy that generates employment and solves the problem of working families, some of whom live in dormitory suburbs with long working days and lack of eagerness for nighttime meal preparation.

### Major Street Foods

Any reference to street food in Portugal needs to include the winter favorite: *castanhas-assadas*—charcoal-roasted chestnuts sold by hawkers in the city streets. In summer, the preference is for ice creams and *farturas*: a traditional Portuguese doughnut formed in long spirals that are cut up into long pieces. *Farturas* are a favorite not just in the city but also in regional fairs where they are sold still piping-hot sprinkled with a mix of sugar and cinnamon. *Farturas* are a culinary trace of



Typical street chestnut seller and customers in Rua Augusta, Lisbon. (Edmund Holt/Dreamstime.com)

the Moorish presence in Portugal, and they can be considered as the twin sisters of the Spanish *churros* and the Madeira Island's (also part of Portugal) *malassadas*.

Everyone cherishes summertime and the street food associated with the beach—*Bolas de Berlim* (a spherical custard-filled doughnut), potato chips, and ice creams. Soccer stadiums are also popular sites for street food. Before the game, long queues of hungry customers line up to the small carts selling *sandes de corato* (pork steaks in bread rolls). The rendered pork fat soaks through the bread giving it a specific taste (and calories). These are usually sold accompanied by a beer since in Portugal, the selling of alcoholic beverages does not require special licensing.

*Malassadas* are a deep-fried sweet pastry made from a thicker dough that are traditionally made just before the beginning of Lent on the Portuguese Island of Madeira. This tradition has been taken by Portuguese migrants to the United States, where it has become a popular street food.

*Paula Arvela*

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## Puerto Rico

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Puerto Rico is one of the Antilles Islands, lying to the east of the Dominican Republic and Cuba. The main island of Puerto Rico proper has a number of smaller and mostly uninhabited islands located in the Caribbean Sea off its shores. With a warm bi-seasonal climate (dry and wet), Puerto Rico was once a sugar-growing area that is now home to a number of small manufacturing and service companies. It also has a large tourism industry catering to North Americans who are attracted to the island's flat beaches. In actuality, Puerto Rico's geography is mostly a low mountain chain covering the middle, with flat coasts and only about 4 percent arable land.

Puerto Rico's earliest peoples were Tainos, who came from nearby Central and South America. Living in villages, they farmed *yuca* (manioc or cassava—a starchy root that needs a great deal of processing to get poisons leached out of it), beans, some chilies and corn, pineapples, and other fruits, and they ate a good deal of fish. The Spanish conquest added rice, plantains, and coconuts (from southeast Asia via Africa), a kind of taro called *yautía*, wheat, onions and garlic, sugarcane, many herbs such as cilantro, and domesticated animals—cattle, pigs, chickens, goats, and sheep. West Africans were brought to the island in the Colonial period and

influenced Puerto Rican food. The main cooking technique introduced from Europe and Africa was frying, now the most common method of cooking street foods. Together, all these ingredients form the basics of Puerto Rican cuisine. Rice and beans are at the basis of many meals, and Puerto Rican dishes are heavy on pork and chicken. One important element is *sofrito*, a mixture of finely diced vegetables such as onion, garlic, tomatoes, and peppers, cooked with spices and herbs. It is used in many dishes to add delicious flavors to otherwise bland foods.

Since 1898, Puerto Rico has been officially a commonwealth, a territory of the United States, when it was ceded by Spain after the Spanish American War. Naturally, North American influence has been strong. American fast-food chains selling hamburgers, fried chicken, and pizza are everywhere as are soft drink companies and candies. Yet Puerto Ricans savor their own cuisines, and street foods are often traditional dishes.

Street-food stands abound in cities, near airports such as in the capital, San Juan, and at beach resorts. The most characteristic street food—and one made at home as well—is *mofongo*. Originating in Africa, the dish is made from green plantains or *yuca* that is fried and pounded into a paste with oil or fat, garlic, and pork cracklings or bacon. It can serve as a kind of dumpling in soups or stand on its own. When stuffed with shredded meat or vegetables, the dish is called *mofongo relleno* and then it resembles the other great Puerto Rican street food, *alcapurria*, a kind of empanada. *Yautía* is cooked and mashed, sometimes with plantains, formed into cakes, and stuffed with many kinds of fillings that range from meats or fish—often crabs on the resort beaches—to vegetables. The small cakes are then deep-fried. In an area where there are many vendors, such as the famous beach area of Luquillo in the north, each of the 60 or so stands has its own special type of *alcapurria*.

There is a wide range of savory fried street foods in addition to *mofongo* and *alcapurria*. They include *pastelillos* or *arepas*, fried stuffed pastries made from wheat flour; *bacalaitos*, fried dough made with salt cod; fried stuffed potato balls; *piononos*, mashed ripe plantains stuffed and fried; and *taquitos*, small tacos rolled up tightly and fried. Perhaps the most widely known Puerto Rican fried food is the *tostone*, thinly sliced plantain chips that are fried twice to a crunchy crispness. Tostones are now eaten universally in the Caribbean and in Central America.

Grilled foods and sandwiches are also featured in food stands. *Pinchos* are like kebabs in other parts of the world. Cubed meats—mainly beef, chicken, or pork—are skewered, seasoned, and cooked over open grills. The diner can dip the cooked meats into a spicy sauce before eating. Sandwiches of all kinds are popular, one of which is the *tripleta*. This is usually a roll filled with three grilled meats and slathered with mayonnaise, mustard, and ketchup. Other simpler sandwiches such as ham or fish are also popular.

Small open-air restaurants called *fondas* serve larger lunchtime meals for working people in towns and cities. Rice and beans, sometimes with cooked meats and seasoned with *sofrito* and a condiment called *sazón*, are common. Soups, some made with tripe, or pig's feet, and many accompanied by *mofongo* are also found. On the coasts, a great many seafood dishes are served, from octopus to shellfish and such local fin fish as *chillo*, or red snapper.

Street food in warm Caribbean climates always includes many fruits and frozen treats. Large bananas (Cavendish) and small red ones, guavas, mangos, passion fruit, pineapples, and melons are refreshing treats on warm, sunny days. Ice cream and frozen ices are widely enjoyed. Flavors run from the standard vanilla and chocolate to fruit flavors including berries and passion fruit. The most famous ice-cream place is in Lares, a town in central Puerto Rico, where the Heladería de Lares serves some 1,000 flavors that include corn, beer, rice and beans, and codfish among other unusual ingredients. Common drinks are the usual international soft drinks, but Puerto Rico has its own soft drink with guava, orange pineapple, and passion fruit among favorite flavors.

*Bruce Kraig*

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# R

## Romania

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Modern Romania was established in 1918, after World War I, when a treaty added Transylvania to the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, but the country has a very long history. It straddles a huge plain that the Romans considered their “bread-basket” and the Ottomans frequently crossed on their way west to attack the Vienna-based Hapsburgs, and the Carpathians, a magnificent horseshoe-shaped mountain range that separates Western Europe from the East and the southeastern Mediterranean lands. This geography has dictated Romania’s turbulent history and is the reason for its rich mixture of peoples—Romanians, Hungarians, Saxons, Roma (Romanian Roma), Jews, Armenians, Ukrainians—living in its villages, towns, and cities.

Romania is an agrarian country with communities proud of their traditions. Its short, hot summers are crammed full with festivals, and life is lived outside. Festival foods range from the modern and simple (corn on the cob, jacket potatoes) to the traditional (jam-filled pancakes, sweet and savory pies, meat grills)—all sold from stands that can be easily transported. Throughout the year, along busy city streets, vendors sell *covrigi* (bread rolls), *plăcinte* (pies), and grilled dishes—*șaorma* (gyros, or döner kebab) and *frigarui* (small kebabs). Both men and women sell street foods, but men usually work a grill. Some street foods are the preserve of a particular community—*kürtős kalács* (“chimney cake”), for instance, is sold by Hungarian-speaking Transylvanians.

During the long, often-harsh winter, hot pies, breads, chestnuts, and meat grills provide warmth and nourishment on city streets for working people, but there is little or no street food in villages or small towns, where it’s easy to return home to eat. Excepting those who grill, and bakeries that have an outlet onto the street, vendors are mobile and go where the crowds are. Since 2007, when Romania joined the European Union, street foods have become increasingly regulated (often because of sanitation considerations), but with incomes remaining low, these inexpensive foods are a valuable source of sustenance to some and, at festivals, highly enjoyable for many, so are unlikely to disappear soon.



*Mici* or *mititei*, Romanian grilled ground meat rolls made from a mixture of beef, lamb and pork and spices and sodium bicarbonate and mineral water. (Ciaobucarest/Dreamstime.com)

## Major Street Foods

### ***Mici/Mititei***

The name of these small spicy meat patties—*mici* or *mititei*—is said to derive from their origin. The story goes that sausages were a favorite dish at a popular mid-19th-century Bucharest inn. One night, with all the sausages eaten and the customers wanting more, the chef had to improvise. So he made little sausage-shaped patties out of his leftover meat and grilled them. The customers loved these wee ones without skins, and a national dish was born.

In fact, *mici* probably date from at least a hundred, if not many hundreds of, years earlier: The Ottomans had a centuries-long presence in Romania, and grilled ground meats were one of their popular, and common, street foods. *Mici*, seasoned with garlic, salt, pepper, summer savory or thyme, and paprika, are always grilled outside and served with mustard, pickles, and bread. Until two generations ago, *mici* grills were so ubiquitous in the streets of Bucharest that their grill smoke was said to be the city's defining symbol in much the same way as the Eiffel Tower represents Paris.

### ***Covrigi***

*Covrigi* are the ideal street food. Inexpensive, tasty, and easy to hold, these warm bread rolls, made from unsweetened dough and similarly shaped to pretzels, are topped with poppy seeds or sesame seeds and large salt grains. Toppings vary from

region to region (plain salt is especially favored in central Romania), so *covrigi* are often given as holiday gifts by townspeople visiting their friends or family in rural areas.

It is said that *covrigi* were introduced to Romania by Greek merchants in the early 1800s, but their similarity to other Romanian pastries, and to the shape of German pretzels, suggests an earlier origin. The town of Buzău is known for its fine *covrigi*, and in 2007, the European Union accorded Buzău *covrigi* Protected Geographical Status.

### ***Kürtős Kalács***

You will find *kürtős kalács* (*tulnic*, in Romanian)—“chimney cake” or “stove cake”—wherever there’s a fair, a carnival, or any kind of street festivity in Transylvania, Romania’s largest province.

This pretty, and very popular, pastry takes some skill to make. The cinnamon-spiced yeast dough is prepared hours earlier, rolled out into thin sheets, and cut into six-inch-wide strips. These are carefully wound around a long cylindrical spit, which the cook revolves over an open fire, all the time brushing the pastry with a sugar syrup to ensure it caramelizes evenly. With a sweet, crispy exterior and soft, smooth interior, and topped with chopped walnuts or almonds, *kürtős kalács* is a lovely sweet treat.

## **Other Street Foods**

### ***Plăcintă***

*Plăcintă* (plural, *plăcinte*) means “cake,” and its etymology (Latin: *placenta*) suggests that it may have a Roman origin. *Plăcinte*—flat pies with sweet or savory fillings such as apple, cheese, jam, or sausage—are fried or baked and sold, wrapped in paper. Throughout Romania, they vary in size, shape, and fillings: along the Black Sea coast, *plăcintă dobrogeană* resembles *borek*, a small pie that’s found throughout the old Ottoman-occupied lands.

### ***Poale’n brâu***

*Poale’n brâu* (sweet cheese and raisin rolls) are one of many kinds of sweet or savory pastries—stuffed with cabbage, cheese, ground meats—sold by street vendors. A specialty of the Moldova region, the colloquial translation of their name—“the bottom of the skirt raised to the waistband”—aptly describes the technique used to make them: The baker arranges a dollop of sweetened cheese and raisins in the center of a square of yeast dough, pulls up each side to enclose it, and bakes the pies until golden brown.

***Clătită***

Popular at festivals, these thin pancakes are sold with all sorts of sweet fillings—chocolate, jam, bananas, ice cream.

***Șaorma***

*Șaorma*, or *gyros* (“turned” in Greek, *döner* in Turkish), are as common and as popular in Romania as elsewhere throughout Europe. As the mixture of highly seasoned, finely ground beef, veal, chicken, or lamb slowly turns on an upright, revolving spit, the cook slices the meat onto a round of pita-like flatbread and smothers this in a warm, garlicky mayonnaise sauce. With side dishes of fried potatoes, sliced peppers, cabbage, onion, and tomatoes, they are an inexpensive, quick, and tasty snack.

***Frigarui***

*Frigarui*—kebabs of highly seasoned pork, beef, lamb, or chicken alternated with fatty bacon, sausages and onions, tomatoes, or bell peppers—are substantial, inexpensive, full-of-flavor street food, especially popular with students. The best are when the meat is marinated in a mixture of herbs, yogurt, garlic, lemon, sugar, ginger, and/or paprika.

*Rosemary Barron*

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**Russian Federation**

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For a country located so far north on the globe, Russia has a surprising number of street-food outlets, many of which do a thriving business even in winter. Vendors sell their wares on city streets that have heavy pedestrian traffic; at the entrances to subway, train, and bus stations; at ports for passenger ships; at open-air markets and around the perimeter of municipal covered markets; at city parks and amusement parks; and on beaches in summer. And for several centuries, street foods have been an integral part of many public festivals.

Many of the foods sold on the streets of Russia today reflect the long history of foreign influences on Russian cuisine. Trade with the Byzantine Empire from the 10th to 13th centuries added buckwheat, rice, cloves, and black pepper

to the Russians' diet. From the mid-13th to late-16th centuries, Mongols originally from Central Asia ruled large areas of what is now Russia and introduced many foods previously unknown to the inhabitants of those regions: noodles and filled dumplings; sauerkraut and other pickled vegetables; citrus fruits, melons, figs, dried apricots, and raisins; sweet pastries and confections; spices such as cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, and saffron; kumis (fermented mare's milk) and, later, tea.

In the early 18th century, during the reign of Tsar Peter the Great, Russian cooking was influenced by ingredients and dishes introduced from Austria, Bavaria, Saxony, Holland, and Scandinavia, including coffee, brandy, chocolates, hard cheeses, little open-face sandwiches called *buterbrody* (buttered bread with various toppings), and potatoes (although potatoes did not become a staple of the Russian diet until the second half of the 19th century). In the 19th century, the expansion of the Russian Empire also brought new foods from the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) and the Black Sea: olive oil, garlic, eggplants, tomatoes, bell peppers, skewered meat grilled over an open fire, a variety of meat- and cheese-filled pastries, and sweet wines. Some of these foreign culinary influences eventually found their way into the street foods of Russia. Street vendors in Russia sold small filled pies known as *pirozinki*; ring-shaped breads of various sizes (threaded on strings for portability); seasonal fruits such as apples and grapes; *sbiten'*, a hot drink made of honey and spices, dispensed from a big copper urn carried on the vendor's back; and steaming hot tea poured from large copper or brass kettles into reusable glasses provided by the vendors. Vendors also hawked their wares at open-air markets and seasonal trade fairs. Religious festivals were also the excuse to eat lots of rich street food, like *bliny*.

After the establishment of the new Soviet Union in 1922, the economic and agricultural policies of the communist government resulted in many hardships for the people, including food shortages, which continued, to a greater or lesser degree, until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. After World War II, the state gradually set up stands to sell ice cream, small savory pies, breads and pastries, *ponchiki* (the Russian version of doughnuts, puffy balls of deep-fried yeast dough sprinkled with sugar), and nonalcoholic drinks at train stations, parks, and a few street locations. Vending machines on the streets dispensed carbonated water, plain or mixed with berry syrup, into a communal cup that hung from a chain attached to each machine, with an apparatus for washing the cup before using it. Street vendors also sold *kvas*—a lightly alcoholic carbonated beverage brewed from rye bread, fruit, or berries—dispensed from little portable barrel-like containers that resembled miniature tanker trailers.

With the political collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, its 15 constituent republics formed separate independent nations, one of which is the Russian Federation, geographically the largest country on earth. Although nearly 80 percent of the

Russian Federation's 138 million people are ethnic Russians, street foods in today's Russia also reflect the culinary influences of other ethnic groups formerly living within the borders of the much larger Soviet Union, as well as contemporary Russians' desires for western-style fast foods.

Russian-owned kiosks and small food trucks also sell their wares on the streets of many cities, and clusters of them can be found near subway, bus, and train station entrances. The largest chains include *Kroshka Kartoshka* (Little Potato), which sells baked potatoes topped with a variety of garnishes, and *Teremok* (Fairytale Cottage), which advertises "Best Bliny in Town," although its specialty is actually large thin *blinchi*, the Russian version of French crepes, offered with a choice of many toppings, from meat, cheese, fish, and caviar to berries, jam, and chocolate. Other street kiosks sell rotisserie chicken, small pizzas, boiled dumplings, smoked or grilled fish, or grilled meats. And even in winter, one of the most popular street foods in Russia is ice cream, sold at special ice-cream kiosks or by street-corner vendors.

## Major Street Foods

### *Pirozhki*

Since at least the 17th century, *pirozhki* (singular *pirozhok*) have been the favorite street food in Russia. These little pies, small enough to be eaten by hand, consist of an outer layer of dough that completely encompasses a sweet or savory filling. Made with yeast-raised dough, or flaky pastry dough containing butter or lard, *pirozhki* can be round, oval, square, rectangular, triangular, or semicircular in shape, and either baked or fried. Savory fillings include seasoned ground meat, cheese, potatoes, onions, mushrooms, turnips, carrots, cabbage, sauerkraut, and rice. Sweet fillings are made of fresh or preserved fruits and berries, poppy seeds, nuts, and sweetened fresh curd cheese.

*Chebureki* are also popular little pies, which originated with the Crimean Tatars living near the Black Sea. Made of a thin layer of pasta dough filled with ground lamb or beef seasoned with onions, garlic, and parsley or cilantro, these half-moon or rectangular pies are always deep-fried. Both *pirozhki* and *chebureki* are sold by individual street vendors, who carry them in portable insulated metal boxes that keep the pies warm. These small pies are also commonly sold at farmers' markets, public festivals, and on railroad platforms.

### *Shashlyk*

An ancient dish, well known to herders and nomads across a wide swath of the Caucasus and Central Asia, *shashlyk* became popular in Russia in the mid-19th century after Georgia, Azerbaijan, and part of Armenia were absorbed into the

Russian Empire. In those regions, *shashlyk* originally referred to cubes of grilled lamb cooked on skewers, whereas *basturma* was the grilled beef version of this dish. But Russians have broadened the term *shashlyk* to mean any kind of meat—pork, beef, lamb, venison—cut into cubes, marinated for several hours, threaded onto skewers, and cooked over hot coals. The marinade ingredients vary from region to region and from cook to cook—sunflower or olive oil, red or white wine, vinegar or pomegranate juice—seasoned with onions, garlic, and a variety of herbs and spices. *Shashlyk* is eaten across all of Russia, from the Baltic coast to Siberia and the Russian Far East. A popular food at public festivals and farmers’ markets, *shashlyk* is also featured as a main course at many Russian restaurants and special *shashlyk* cafes and is a favorite food for picnics.

### ***Morozhenoe***

Ice cream (*morozhenoe*) is said to have been introduced into Russia from Western Europe in the 1700s, and by the mid-1800s, some Russian households even had their own hand-cranked ice-cream makers. In the 1930s, the Soviets started the large-scale production of commercial ice cream to be sold at kiosks in major cities. Ice cream became one of the most beloved of Russian street foods, almost as popular in winter as in summer. During the Soviet era, street vendors in winter sold unwrapped ice-cream cones, stacked in cardboard boxes, with no fear of their melting in the frigid air. Individually wrapped ice-cream bars imported from the West became fashionable in the early post-Soviet period, but many Russians still prefer traditional Russian-made products containing no artificial flavorings or other chemical additives. Chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry have traditionally been the flavors of choice, but customers now also flock to the Baskin Robbins outlets in more than 80 Russian cities, which offer a total of 125 different flavors.

### ***Bliny***

*Bliny* (singular *blin*) are a type of Russian pancake traditionally made from a batter of buckwheat flour and yeast. From the 18th through 20th centuries, they were eaten primarily at the pre-Lenten festival of Maslenitsa, where people consumed huge quantities of *bliny* freshly cooked by street vendors and topped with melted butter, sour cream, mushrooms, fish, caviar, fresh curd cheese, honey, or jam. Today *bliny* are a year-round street food sold at many outlets, including the *Teremok* (Fairytale Cottage) and *Russkoe Bliny* (Russian pancakes) chains of *bliny* stands. Most contemporary street-food *bliny* are actually *blinchiki*, the easier-to-make, nonleavened Russian version of French crepes, made with wheat flour, which are wider, thinner, and lighter in color than traditional Russian buckwheat *bliny*.





A *Bliny* (pancakes) vendor in traditional Ukrainian costume at Maslenitsa, an ancient week long celebration of the end of winter and the beginning of the Lenten season in the Eastern Orthodox churches. (AP Photo/Misha Japaridze)

## Other Street Foods

### *Shawarma*

A more recent, very popular addition to the Russian street-food scene is *shawarma*, stacks of beef, lamb, chicken, or pork cooked on a rotating vertical spit (like Turkish *döner kebab* or Greek *gyros*). The meat is sliced off the spit and served inside a folded flatbread, garnished with sliced tomatoes, cucumbers, and onions, shredded cabbage, garlic-seasoned yoghurt sauce, and sometimes dried hot red pepper flakes.

### *Pel'meni*

Little boiled dumplings introduced to Russia by the Mongols, *pel'meni* not only are considered “the national dish of Siberia,” but are also popular throughout Russia. Pockets of filled pasta dough formed into the shape of little ears, *pel'meni* are similar in shape and size to Italian *cappelletti*. The most common fillings are ground pork or beef combined with minced onions, but *pel'meni* can also be filled with fish, game, cheese, mushrooms, or fresh greens. *Pel'meni* are served hot, in bowls, garnished with butter, sour cream, Russian hot-spicy mustard, vinegar, or sometimes

soy sauce. A street food traditionally served outdoors at winter festivals in Siberian villages, *pel'meni* can now be bought year-round at some kiosks and food trucks in Russian cities. *Vareniki* are the Ukrainian version, little half-moon-shaped boiled dumplings usually filled with cherries or fresh curd cheese.

### ***Kartofel'***

Potatoes (*kartofel'*) are a relative newcomer as a street food, although they have been a staple of the Russian diet since the second half of the 19th century. Vendors sold potato salad and boiled potatoes on railroad platforms in the 20th century, and French fries were popularized by the Western fast-food chains that have proliferated in Russia during the past 20 years. The Russian-owned Kroschka Kartoshka (Little Potato) chain of kiosks specializes in selling baked potatoes served with a wide selection of toppings.

### ***Chak-Chak***

Some street foods in Russia are very regional, such as *chak-chak*, a favorite sweet sold at street stands in Tatarstan, a region bordering on the Volga and Kama rivers. *Chak-chak* consists of little cylinders or balls of egg flour dough deep-fried in butter or oil, drenched with honey or sugar syrup, and pressed into molds or formed by hand into fist-size cubes, balls, or pyramids.

### ***Kvas***

An ancient drink made in Russia for at least a thousand years, *kvas* is a slightly sweet, mildly alcoholic beverage brewed from rye (or other) bread, or from fruits or berries, combined with water, sugar, and yeast. Probably one of the earliest drinks sold by street vendors in Russia, *kvas* is still popular today. Since the mid-20th century, *kvas* has been dispensed on city streets from little blue or yellow portable metal barrels that resemble miniature tanker trailers with a spigot on one end. Vendors used to pour the *kvas* into small glasses (supposedly rinsed clean after each use), but now they use disposable plastic cups.

## **Western Fast Foods**

During the past 20 years, western fast-food chains have popularized many other foods that are now commonly eaten on the streets of Russia, including hamburgers, hot dogs and other sausages, French fries, and pizzas—all of which, in one form or another, originated in Europe before they became associated with giant American fast-food companies operating on a global scale. Many of these companies now have franchised outlets in Russia. Sausages were certainly sold as street foods in Russia long before the recent revival of a market economy there, but in the

21st century, a greater variety, and better quality, of sausages are now sold at Russian street stands, including sausage styles from Germany, Hungary, and Poland.

*Sharon Hudgins*

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## Singapore

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The Republic of Singapore is a city-state located off the southern tip of the *Malay Peninsula*, separated from Malaysia by the Straits of Johor. It united with other former British territories to form Malaysia in 1963 and became a fully independent state two years later. It consists of 63 islands and has a land area of just 272 square miles. It has a population of 5.1 million, of whom around 75 percent are of Chinese descent, 13 percent of Malay origin, 9 percent of Indian descent, and the rest from other groups. A financial center, it is one of the world's richest countries with a per capita GDP of nearly \$60,000.

Singapore has developed a highly food-centric culture. A case in point is that in the National Museum of Singapore, the very first gallery in the museum is devoted to the street food of Singapore. The people of Singapore have also developed a term for food enthusiasm: *makan*. In Malay, *makan* means simply “to eat,” but its connotation suggests a kind of feeding frenzy, an unquenchable enthusiasm for food.

Though they're still referred to as “hawkers” (people who call out to passersby to hawk their wares), the Singaporean government outlawed actual street food several years ago, and many of the street-food vendors in Singapore are now collected into roof-covered areas—food courts—with convenient tables so that people can sit while they eat. Hawking itself has become rare. Still, Singapore understands good business, and now the government actively supports hawker markets, though it is encouraging lighter and healthier food options. In support of hawker markets, the government has even established a Web site for those seeking information about these marvelous Singaporean food resources (<http://www.myhawkers.sg/>).

Permanent buildings are much easier to monitor than transient street stands, and the level of sanitation in Singaporean markets is quite high. Napkins are abundant (which is not always the case in Southeast Asian markets), and many food courts have water and soap for cleaning up before or after dining.

Singaporean markets attract male and female customers from all social strata. Because markets are enclosed and feature tables, it's not uncommon to see families, mothers with children, and groups of friends and others gathered throughout the day to enjoy food. The vendors themselves are both male and female, unlike some other Southeast Asian markets that are managed mainly by women.

The food reflects the influences of all Singapore's ethnic groups, so that side by side, you may see Malaysian *nasi lemak* (rice cooked in coconut milk, served with

vegetables and fish or eggs), Chinese Hainan chicken (chicken cooked in its own broth, served with the broth and rice), and *roti prata* (a North Indian bread that is a staple on the Singaporean streets).

Singaporeans love to eat and love to talk about food. As English is the official language of Singapore, it's quite easy for Westerners not only to order food but to get into valuable food conversations with fellow buyers as well. It is not at all uncommon for tourists to sidle up to locals to inquire as to the appropriate use of condiments with a specific dish. Singaporeans seem to love to hear how much foreigners appreciate the food of their country.

## Main Markets

The numerous hawker centers in Singapore are government owned and are spread all over the city-state. The major markets include the following:

- Lau Pa Sat in Chinatown uses a 19th-century building that houses hundreds of vendor stalls.
- Old Airport Road Market occupies a perhaps unappealing location, but is a rich source for Singaporean chow.
- Jurong West Food Center is not as large as Old Airport Road Market, but was named the *Favorite Hawker Centre* in the 2010 City Hawker Food Hunt.
- Newton Circus Food Center was built in the early 1970s and is heavily promoted by the Singapore Tourism Board.
- Bugis Street Flea Market offers a range of street foods in addition to fashions and hard merchandise.
- Tiong Bahru is a popular market located near a large mall as well as a train station, making it a convenient spot to stop and grab a snack.

Because many Singaporean markets are housed in permanent structures, vendors are able to use a wide range of preparation techniques, including ovens, fry stations, and grills. The stability of their locations within food courts enables the vendors to offer sometimes more elaborate foods than that would be possible on the street.

## Major Street Foods

Given the range of cultural influences, Singaporean street food offers an incredible range of options.

## Satay

This skewered meat is the Singaporean street food most likely to be immediately recognized by Westerners. Marinated and then grilled, satay in Singapore is usually made of chicken, but it's also possible to find satay of beef, mutton, and pork.

## Hainan Chicken

Chicken with rice cooked together in chicken broth is the epitome of Southeast Asian comfort food: simply flavored, rich and warm, nonthreatening. Tradition demands that it be served with sambal, a spicy sauce based on chili and sometimes ginger, as well as a small cup of the chicken broth. Though it apparently originated on Hainan Island off the coast of mainland China, this dish is an enduring favorite in Singapore and throughout the region.

## Black Pepper Crab

Cooked in oil or butter and coated with black pepper, this large crab is a delicious mess, with the sharpness of the pepper nicely balancing and playing off the richness of the oil. This is the kind of dish that will convince even the more abstemious that licking fingers, though perhaps uncouth, is entirely justified under some circumstances. A variation is the somewhat sweeter chili crab.

## Laksa

A spicy noodle soup, *laksa* is usually presented in two different forms: curry and asam. Curry *laksa* is made with coconut milk, shrimp, noodles, tofu, and spicy curry paste; asam *laksa* has no coconut milk and features a somewhat sour fish broth. There are many, many variations on these two basic themes. *Katong laksa* is a relatively new variety, named after a Singaporean neighborhood, and featuring thick noodles usually cut up into bite-sized pieces.

## Roti Prata

Though it has roots in the Indian subcontinent, roti prata is now considered a home-grown Singaporean dish. This flatbread is flipped in the air and manipulated until it is very thin, and then folded and fried. Though it can be eaten alone, it's most often seen in combination with other foods, such as sauced meat and vegetables. Roti prata proves an excellent sponge for sauce.

## Murtabak

This is a local equivalent of an Indian stuffed roti (from the Arabic word for folded). A dough made from white flour is wrapped around spiced minced meat and beaten

egg and folded into packets that are sautéed, cut into pieces, and served with a curry sauce.

## Other Street Foods

### Fried Carrot Cake

This snack has nothing in common with what we in the West know as carrot cake. It contains no carrot, and it's not sweet. Rather, this street eat is basically a mixture of egg and radish with perhaps shrimp and fish sauce. In Singapore, this relatively simple carrot cake is called "white." Further north up the Malay Peninsula, soy is added, making for a "black" carrot cake.

### *Rojak*

A somewhat conceptually challenging dish of fruit and vegetables with shrimp paste, *rojak* may include mango, pineapple, cucumbers, peanuts, and even small Chinese fritters. In Malay, the word "rojak" means "mixture," and in practice, this dish brings together an unusual blend of flavors.

### *Otak-Otak*

A spicy paste made from fish, onions, eggs, sago, and herbs and spices is steamed or grilled in a banana leaf. *Ootak* means "brains" in Malaysian, so called because the ridges on the cooked fish paste are reminiscent of the wrinkles on a brain. Though it may be eaten alone, it is often served over *bee hoon*, vermicelli noodles wok-fried with condiments such as strips of egg, vegetables like onion and green beans, and sometimes shrimp.

### *Popiah*

Although they are now considered indigenous to Singapore, the Peranakan were originally Chinese who immigrated to the island and developed their own culture, traditions, and foodways. These Straits Chinese, as they were called, have developed a number of characteristic foods, but the one most likely to be found in hawker markets is the *popiah*, a spring roll filled with vegetables and perhaps hoisin sauce, though fillings vary from vendor to vendor. The one constant is the thin wrapper that encloses the ingredients.

### Beverages

In addition to water and soda, hawkers' markets offer several somewhat unusual beverages.

- **Barley tea.** Basically water in which roasted barley has been boiled, this noncaffeinated herbal tea may be sweetened with honey. Barley tea is believed to be a natural diuretic, and a number of benefits have been attributed to it, including the ability to cleanse the body and even resist certain cancers.
- **Cane juice.** This juice, made of crushed sugarcane, yields a light-green nectar with very mild flavor and slight sweetness. Cane juice is created when whole stalks of sugarcane are run through a machine consisting of two rapidly rotating steel wheels that completely crush the cane so that the juice runs into waiting receptacles.

Though Singapore seems not to have developed the extensive dessert menu of countries like Thailand, for sheer weirdness, consider the Singaporean ice-cream sandwich, which is basically blocks of ice cream between slices of white bread.

*David Hammond*

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## South Africa

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The Republic of South Africa encompasses the lower tip of the African continent. There are 11 climate zones in the Republic, ranging from snowy mountains to warm seacoasts, and the country ranks among the most world's greatest biodiversity regions. Since more than 60 percent of the nation's population lives in cities, South Africa's produce goes into the many street foods found there.

Portuguese explorers landed here in 1487, followed by the Dutch, who established permanent colonies on the southern tip of Africa in 1652. After the establishment of *Fort de Goede Hoop*, the colonist brought slaves from Malay, Indonesia, Madagascar, and India as workers. The fort later became the economically and culturally important Cape Colony and the South African city of Cape Town (or Kaaps-tad). Portuguese, German, and French also migrated here. The colonists eventually expanded into lands occupied by such peoples as the Khoikhoi (or Hottentots), Xhosa, and Zulu. A series of wars forced the native South African populations into the margins so they were not integrated into the new society.



During the 1800s, the discovery of diamonds, and later gold, resulted in the Anglo-Boer War(s), and eventually the British annexation of Cape Town and the Cape Colony. When slavery was abolished in the British Empire in 1839, Indians were brought in as workers. In 1909, the autonomous Union of South Africa was established. It obtained independence from the British crown in 1931 and became the Republic of South Africa in 1961. Because of strong racial segregation laws until the 1990s, known as the Apartheid system, a small white minority controlled the vast majority of blacks, coloreds (people of mixed ancestry), and Asians. The first official public elections ended *apartheid*, and today the country is a multiethnic nation embracing diverse cultures and languages. Almost 80 percent of the population is of (black) African ancestry, 9 percent white (European), 9 percent colored, and 2.5 percent is of Indian/Asian origin.

South Africa is divided into nine provinces and is home to more than 50 million people. The largest part of the population lives in urban areas, and each province has a large city with at least one million inhabitants. The biggest cities are Johannesburg and Durban, with more than 10 million people. Many black South Africans live in townships, densely populated urban locations, or areas in the periphery of towns and cities.

## Rainbow Cuisine

Contemporary South African cuisine, nicknamed “rainbow cuisine,” incorporates the culinary practices and influence of many cultures. The daily food of the majority of the population can be traced back to a blend of European, Asian (Malay), and indigenous cooking styles and practices. European foods and dishes such as *Potjiekos* (“pot food” or stews, cooked outdoors in a round cast-iron, three-legged pot or *Potjie*), *Melkert* (“milk tart,” a sweet pastry custard tart), *Droëwors* (dry sausage), *Boerwors* (farmer sausage), and *Biltong* (dried, salted meat) evolved and were popularized from the 17th century onward. Containing Asian spices (cumin, turmeric), the national minced meat dish *Bobotie* is a spicy Malay version of the British Shepherd’s pie. Throughout the country, the *Braai* (barbecue) is very popular. In conjunction with meat, many people rely on *millies* (corn or maize): corn is roasted on the cob and widely used to prepare a stiff “pap” (porridge) also known as *P(h)uthu*. After its arrival from the Americas in the 1700s, corn rapidly replaced sorghum, traditionally a staple ingredient. Nowadays indigenous Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Tswana, and Swazi communities commonly use corn to prepare all sorts of foods. Similarly, a wide range of street foods can be traced back to nonindigenous populations.

Selling street and snack foods provides many Black South Africans with employment, among them many women. At a national level, more than 10 percent of

South Africans buy street foods from around 60,000 stalls officially counted nationwide. Most of the street foods are sold from stalls, stands, carts, and kiosks in informal settings in urban areas. The street vendors can be found on the pavement of busy streets and busy public areas such as the beaches, bus and railway stations, and school premises. Very often, the vendors (hawkers) sell only a few foods and drinks, often the same items, and most of the crisps (chips), cooked foods, and soft drinks are sold to Black Africans.

## Major Street Foods

Corn on the cob (millies or mealies) are sold almost everywhere by female “mealie cookers” that set up their drums or braziers on the pavement. Smoke from the wood fires often indicates the presence of a mealie facility. Traditionally, African women carry the lit braziers on the head, which is a Zulu specialty known as Bovine Head Cooking, and prepare, cook, and serve the meat of the heads of cow and goats and smileys (roasted sheep’s head).

## Townships’ Street Meats

Grilled, deep-fried, and boiled chicken heads and feet, known as *Walkie-Talkies*, enjoy nationwide popularity, but are commonly purchased at stalls, taxi stands, and markets in townships. *Walkie-Talkies* evolved during apartheid when people living in townships and workers received leftover parts of chicken from wealthy farmers and turned these into grilled, deep-fried, or boiled foods, seasoned with pepper and salt. *Walkie-Talkies* are eaten with “pap” or corn porridge. Sometimes *Walkie-Talkies* are boiled and prepared with salt and spices or stewed with onions, green peppers, and tomatoes. The skin and meat of chicken feet are scraped off with the teeth, and the meat is chewed up. Apart from the beak, the chicken heads are consumed whole. Other street foods with unusual animal parts include *Amanqina*, the spiced and boiled hoof of a cow, pig, or sheep; the township staple *Skop*, the braised head of a cow, sheep, or goat, which is eaten on the bone; *Mala*, chicken intestines that are first boiled and then fried; and *Mogodu*, boiled tripe that normally is served with *Samp*, slowly cooked, dried, crushed corn kernels and beans. Zulu refers to *Samp* as *Isistambu*, but it is the traditional dish of the Nguni people, especially the Xhosa tribe. *Samp* is on record as the favorite dish of the most famous Nguni tribe member *Madiba* or Nelson Mandela.

## Malay Influence

*Sosaties*, marinated skewers of meat, usually lamb (mutton) or beef, are a popular Malay-style street corner food and very similar to Asian satay and Middle

eastern-style kebabs. In South Africa, the meat is marinated in tamarind juice with such ingredients as fried onions, chilies, garlic, and curry leaves, put on skewers. *Sosaties* are either pan fried or cooked over an open fire or grill.

*Samoosas* (or *samosas*), which are of Indian origin, are popular in Cape Town. The fried or baked triangular pastry is stuffed with a mixture of cooked potatoes, onions, peas, coriander, and lentils. Apart from a vegetarian *Samoosa*, there are also variations with chicken, lamb, and beef. *Samoosas* are a favorite *Padkos* (food for the road) that is either brought from home or bought at road stalls.

## European Influence

*Vetkoek* (literally, fat or grease cake) are deep-fried dough balls made from a dough of flour, yeast, and salt. *Vetkoek* can be stuffed with sweet or savory fillings. Apart from filling the dough before deep-frying, South Africans cut *Vetkoek* open and fill it with curried minced beef, cheese, butter, jams, and syrup. *Vetkoek* variations can include a stuffing from chicken fillet and mayonnaise, topped with cheese and bacon. At a traditional *Braai*, it is served alongside *Boerewors*, the farmers' sausage made from fresh meats, which is also turned into a popular street food. *Boerewors* is made from coarsely minced beef or pork with such spices as coriander, nutmeg, clove, and allspice. The sausage is not only grilled over an open fire, but also cooked on a (gas) grill, in the oven or in a pan. Served on a bread roll, and known as the *Boerie roll*, it is the South African equivalent of the hot dog, which as a *Hoddog* also enjoys popularity. American-style hot dogs are commonly sold from carts and vans, and a chain of food shops called Wild Bean (owned by the British Petroleum Company). *Pap en Vleis* (porridge and meat, beef, or chicken) is a traditional street food in Johannesburg. In addition, street vendors sell pies, fried fish, pizzas, chicken—and hamburgers, curries, “pap” (*Phutu* or porridge), fish and chips, and the popular snack food *Slap chips*, which are French fries drenched in vinegar, sprinkled with salt, *Aromat* (a mass produced seasoning), and chili powder.

## Filled Bread Loaves: Bunny Chow, Kota, and the Gatsby

Filled loaves and bread rolls are among the most popular street foods. *Bunny Chow*, originating in the city of Durban and developed by working-class Indians, is a very popular hollowed-out loaf of bread filled with a meat or vegetarian curry. The removed soft bread is used to dip in the curry sauce. Although traditionally Indians do not eat with cutlery, it is also often said that *Bunny Chow* was invented by Indian golf caddies not being allowed to use cutlery during apartheid.

*Kota* is the Sowetan slang for a “quarter” loaf of bread with any type of filling inside. In slang, *Kota* is also referred to as *Spatlo* indicating it is easily carried. *Kotas* evolved from the Indian *Bunny Chow* during the late 1970s and originally consisted of bread, mashed potato, mincemeat, and atchar (a spicy Indian condiment

or pickle developed in South Africa). The older generation still eats this version accompanied by a cooked chicken's foot. The most popular *Kotas* are a quarter loaf of white bread filled with fried chips (French fries), cheese, meats, sausages, fried eggs, and (hot) sauces. Popular among youngsters in Soweto and Johannesburg is the "Sowetan quarter," a *Kota* filled with French fries.

*Gatsby*, a long bread roll cut lengthwise, stuffed or filled with fish or meats, hot vinegary French fries (known as *slap chips*), masala (an Indian spice mixture), and hot sauce or pickles, enjoys popularity in Cape Town. The most popular *Gatsbys* are filled with *Polony*, curled red meat sausages, and a corruption from British word Bolony; commonly all sorts of salads are served on the side. According to the legend, the *Gatsby* is invented by a Maori chief passionate about rugby and owes its popularity to the popularity of the New Zealand rugby team in Cape Town. The invention is also claimed by a local fish-and-chips shop and brought in connection with the 1974 Hollywood movie *The Great Gatsby*, starring Robert Redford as Jay Gatsby.

## Drinks

Throughout South Africa, drinking black tea is common practice. In recent years, South Africans started developing a taste for caffeine-free *Rooibos* tea, from the oxidized leaves of the typical South African plant (L.) *Aspalathus linearis*. It is served black and either with lemon or honey.

Popular carbonated soft drinks, known as fizzy drinks, include bottles and cans of Appletiser (apple, pear, and grape flavors), Bashew's (since 1899), Coca Cola, Fanta, Iron Brew, Soda King, King Cola, and Twizza.

Traditionally homemade by women and drunk straight after production are African beers, which are commonly known by their names in local languages such as *mahewu*, *mechow*, and *umqombothi*. These popular beers, with a relatively low alcohol content, are produced with corn or sorghum, malt and yeast, and mixed with water. *Gemmerbier*, ginger flavored "beer," is prepared by fermenting ginger, raisins, yeast, cream of tartar, and tartaric acid in water. The popular refreshing, slightly fermented drink *Mageu*, Mahewu, Amarahewu, or Amahewu is made from corn porridge with flour and diluted with water, similar to *Amasi* (sour milk) fermented milk with a yoghurt taste. *Mageu* can be purchased as a supermarket product and on the streets.

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## Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Burma)

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The cuisine of Southeast Asia has many overlapping flavors and ingredients. The influence of colonization and the climate are the largest contributing factors to the cohesive cuisine in the countries discussed in this section. Located just south of China, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Burma are all partially bordered by coasts. Laos is not, and its street food has much less seafood as a result. A large Buddhist and Hindu presence is strong throughout the area. The moist land of Southeast Asia makes it

ideal for cultivating rice. The grain is a staple ingredient for much of the food produced in the area, including street-side dining. Japanese occupation after World War II led to eventual independence for several countries in the area.

The population of Cambodia is largely Khmer or descendants of the Khmer Empire. At its peak from the 10th to 13th centuries, the Khmer Empire ruled much of Southeast Asia, including the countries discussed in this section. Cambodia was also attacked by the Thai and Vietnamese before it was placed under French rule in 1887. After gaining independence from France in 1953, Cambodia was occupied by Japan and Vietnam, before it achieved its relative current stability. Burma was occupied by Britain from the 1820s to the 1880s and designated as part of India until



A young girl selling dried grasshoppers at Skun, between Phnom Penh and Kampong Cham, Cambodia. (Wan Ashhar Marzuki Wan Mustafa/Dreamstime.com)

1937. Its street food shows a strong influence from Indian cuisine, including samosas and combination of flavors.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Laos was controlled by Thailand until becoming part of French Indochina and then becoming independent in 1953 following Japanese occupation. Vietnam was under French rule from the 1880s. Though declared independent in the early 1900s, French control did not end until 1954. French cooking techniques are seen consistently in several foods throughout Southeast Asia, especially in the baguettes and crepes popularly sold at street side to locals and tourists in Vietnam and Laos.

## Vietnam

Vietnam's street food culture is integral to the larger cultural identity of Vietnamese life. The country's cuisine has been shaped by a wide variety of influences, including the tropical Southeast Asian climate and relations with other countries. French and Chinese occupation helped shape a cuisine that is both bright and satisfying. The country's more than 91.5 million residents eat at least one meal every day on the street. The communal culture of Vietnam is seen in the morning when thousands of scooters fill the streets, creating a commotion similar to that in a beehive. As the sun rises, shop doors open and plastic tables and chairs are set out for street-side dining.

Commuters and tourists are likely to be seen enjoying morning coffee at Internet cafés. Rich, dark coffee is brewed into a glass through a small filter, called a *phin* perched at the top. The coffee streams over ice into a waiting pool of sweetened condensed milk. Classic Vietnamese coffee is available from street vendors throughout the day. Internet cafés invite commuters to grab a quick cup of coffee and catch up with others in the community or work on computers. "Drive-through" culture does not exist as it is known in the United States.

Aside from the morning commute, other meals in Vietnam are also commonly consumed street side. Dinner is eaten late in the evening and often the whole family is together. Street-side cafés court passerby to grab a quick bite or stay and enjoy the company of friends and family. Glossy, tourist-filled areas like parts of Ho Chi Minh City have slightly less available street food than other areas.

Food vending is a large industry in Vietnam. In street-side stands, an entire family can often be seen working. Parents cook and wait on customers while children assist with cleanup. Because street food is so mobile and diverse in Vietnam, a wide variety of people take part in the vocation. In a smaller city, like Hoi An, there are many different street vendors in a given area. A single block may contain a corner stand with a boiling pot of *phô*, a cart with fresh baguettes, rice milk ice cream, and even a small grill carried over one shoulder to prepare crisp, grilled corn on the street.

## Major Street Foods

### *Phô*

Many people interrupt their morning commute with a steaming bowl of *phô*, a rich beef-based noodle soup. The national dish of Vietnam, and the most popular choice for breakfast, *phô* has several variations, including *phô bo* (beef), *phô ga* (chicken), and *phô chay* (vegetable). *Phô* is prepared by slowly simmering bones and scraps to create a clear broth. The broth is layered with rice noodles and topped with onion, ginger, and thinly sliced meat. The dish contains onions and the occasional bean sprout as well as the warm aromas of anise, cinnamon, and ginger. Street-side *phô* operations with tables generally give the diner a plate of mint, garlic, basil, lime, coriander, chili, and *nuac mam* (fermented fish sauce) to customize their dish.

### *Banh Mi Kep*

Crisp, fresh baguettes, called *banh mi*, are ubiquitous in Vietnam. *Banh mi kep* is one of the more popular street foods. A single loaf, approximately six-to-eight inches long, is cut down the side and generally stuffed with pork, though beef and chicken are used as well. In addition to the meat, *banh mi keps* are filled with fragrant coriander leaves, pickled carrots, onion, chilies, and other vegetables.

### *Banh Xeo*

The heavy French influence on Vietnamese cuisine is especially apparent in Hue and the rest of central Vietnam. Crepes, or *banh xeo*, are a savory example of French cuisine served on the streets of Hue and throughout the country. A salty, classic crepe is made on a griddle with eggs and rice flour and then rolled around a filling comprising shredded pork, bean sprouts, and mushrooms. Seasonings vary by region and include *nuac mam*, fermented soy paste, chilies, onions, and turmeric.

## Other Street Foods

### *Grilled Corn*

In Southeast Asia, it is common to see an individual, often a woman, cooking food and carrying her wares over her shoulder with two baskets, one balanced on each end of a bamboo pole. One basket is typically full of ingredients and supplies, and the other holds a steaming pot or small, sizzling grill. The operation can be set up anywhere hungry customers roam. The most common basket kitchens in Vietnam

sell grilled corn. The charred husk is peeled back to reveal steaming kernels flavored with smoke.

### **Dessert**

Eating in Vietnam typically consists of several small snacks throughout the day rather than larger meals. Though dessert is not a central facet of street food, it has a constant presence. Stalls and stands selling cut pineapple, vibrant dragon fruit, and leathery jackfruit in plastic bags are available for snacking, along with baskets of spiky, dark red rambutans and other fruit. Baked goods are also sold street side, including elaborately decorated cakes and pastries. Rolling carts of glossy pastry appear most commonly in tourist-heavy areas of Ho Chi Minh City.

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## **Laos**

Laotian street cuisine becomes much more active at night. Alleys begin to bustle in the evening as hundreds of tourists and locals descend on the markets. The night market in the city of Luang Prabang features pickles, dumplings, spring rolls, and various meats wrapped in banana leaves for grilling. In Vang Vieng, near the Kang temple, an endless line of buffets, staffed mostly by women, displays numerous stainless steel and plastic bowls awaiting customers. The Mekong night market features tables covered with a *mélange* of fresh produce, spices and fermented fish, shrimp, and bean paste waiting to be cooked to order.

### **Major Street Foods**

#### ***Laap***

*Laap* is the national dish of Laos, a rich blend of toasted rice powder, or *khao khua*, and chopped meat, often pork or beef, mixed with lime and fish sauce. It is served with sticky rice, called *khao neow*. It can be served raw or cooked and features



beef or fish and lime, *padaek* (Laotian fish sauce), chilies, coriander, and mint. It resembles a thick stir-fry and is sometimes also paired with a complimentary soup to complete the meal. On the street, one can find pop-up restaurants where flavor and ingredients can be customized on the table or taken to go.

### ***Kao Soi***

This common street-food dish has a pork-based sauce with fermented bean paste, salt, garlic, chilies, and flat rice noodles. *Kao soi* noodles are usually fairly wide (approximately a quarter of an inch) and are paired with such vegetables as watercress, green beans, cabbage, pea shoots, and mixed greens. The rich pork sauce is slowly simmered with bean paste, spices, and tomatoes and is used to thicken the cooking liquid around the vegetables. The finished mixture is spooned atop boiled rice noodles and fresh greens and finished with crispy pieces of pig skin or rice.

## **Other Street Foods**

### ***Pancakes***

Throughout Laos, but especially in the town of Vang Vieng, pancakes are served alone or as a substitute for bread in a sandwich. The thick dough is stretched and handled until it resembles a translucent membrane. Slightly more substantial than Vietnamese crepes, the pancakes of Laos still echo French influence. Made on a large outdoor griddle and drizzled with sweetened condensed milk or chocolate syrup, the pancakes are cut into bite-sized pieces and placed in small cellophane bags for easy travel. In some cases, slices of fruit, most commonly bananas, are folded into the pastry during the cooking process.

### ***Tam Mak Hung***

Variations of papaya salad abound throughout Southeast Asia, but in Laos, sweet papayas are mixed with chilies and tomatoes. The mixture is seasoned with lemon juice, sugar, salt, and paste made from prawns and ground with a mortar and pestle.

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## Cambodia

Cambodian cuisine is influenced by that of neighboring countries as well as the Chinese, French, and Vietnamese, who occupied the country at various times. The tropical climate and rich natural resources of the area lend themselves to diverse food production, much of which is available on the street. Women are the main attendants of stands and also walk the streets with baskets of snacks. Snacking aside, the staple of many larger meals in Cambodia is rice. Street vendors serve it with soup and stir-fries as well as in steamed cakes or sticky, sweet spheres for dessert.

### Major Street Foods

#### *Fried Insects (A-Ping)*

One of the more distinctive facets of Cambodian cuisine is the consumption of fried insects, grubs and arachnids, called *a-ping*. Bowls lining street vendors' tables showcase the deep-fried crickets, water bugs, and tarantulas available for sale. They are tossed in salt, sugar, and oil before deep frying until crisp. The insect trade is part of the local economy, as people prepare the specimens for market vendors (removing tarantula fangs, for example) or collect and sell the small creatures themselves.

#### *Cockles*

In the street, cockles are sold for snacking. The freshwater clams are pushed down the streets in large carts ready for hungry passersby. They are either boiled or fried and then tossed with salt, chili, and garlic. The small pearly shells are then pulled apart by hand and the firm pinkish-gray flesh peeled from the inside.

#### *Kuy Teav*

*Kuy teav* is a rice noodle soup thickened with wheat gluten and flavored with beef or pork. Mushrooms, onions, lettuce, carrot, and green onion float throughout the dish, seasoned with garlic, dried squid, and cilantro. Balls of pork or other meat are added to the mixture, which may also include crab or shrimp. The rich breakfast

is often an opportunity to use ingredients, especially meat, which might otherwise be wasted.

## Other Street Foods

### *Pong Tea Khon*

Fertilized duck or chicken eggs are one of the more sensationalized aspects of Cambodian cuisine. *Pong tea khon* is prepared by boiling a fertilized egg. They are held street side in large bowls or baskets and sold individually, or packed in a small bag with salt, pepper, and, occasionally, other seasonings including lime juice.

### *Sugarcane Juice*

*Dteuk am bpoh*, or sugarcane juice, is popular throughout Southeast Asia. The thick, fibrous stalks are squeezed through a heavy-duty appliance designed specifically for the task. Each piece of sugarcane is repeatedly fed through the machine until dry. The juice is shaken with ice and served very cold. It is sometimes flavored with citrus to cut the sweetness.

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## Burma (Myanmar)

Burmese street cuisine is similar to that of other countries in Southeast Asia, but the largely Buddhist population, coupled with the presence of Chinese and Indian cultures, shapes a cuisine unique to Burma. The country was formed by several dynasties and invasions by British and Chinese. Burma gained independence from Britain during the mid-1900s.

During the country's formative years, the Burmese economy was largely agricultural. Larger cities have an especially wide variety of Burmese street food, including Rangoon and Mandalay, where the local economies, especially economic power driven by women, heavily features street food.

## Major Street Foods

### *Mohinga*

One of the country's most popular dishes, *mohinga* is sold at both street-side stands and restaurants. *Mohinga* is a rich, fish-based broth with rice noodles flavored with typical Southeast Asian and Indian flavors, including lemongrass, garlic, and ginger topped with boiled eggs, banana blossoms, or fritters (*akyaw*). This soup is served throughout the day, but mainly for breakfast.

### *Samusas*

The Indian influence on Burmese cuisine is showcased in the samusas sold in street stalls throughout the country. Samusas are fried pastries filled with meat or vegetables, similar to a savory handheld pie. In Burma, samusas are stuffed with pork or other meat, vegetables, especially potatoes and peas, and even spices including anise and cinnamon. Burmese samusas may also be served in soup: the pastry is cut into sections and covered in broth and herbs.

## Other Street Foods

### *Skewers*

Throughout Burma, but especially in Rangoon, grilling and barbecuing is a street-food standby. Popular grilled items include bat, poultry, pork, tofu, fish, and quail eggs, and such vegetables as okra, mushrooms, zucchini, lotus root, garlic, and potatoes. The grilled dishes are seared street side on thin bamboo sticks convenient for consuming on the run. Little meat is wasted during the barbecue process. For bat skewers, the lean meat, including the bones, is wrapped around the skewers and roasted over a grill. All manner of meat is available and can be eaten plain, flavored by smoke, or dipped in a rich, oily broth.

### *Mohnt Laymyah*

A small, puffy disk of dough, *mohnt laymyah* is a type of fried pastry filled with chickpeas, sliced scallions, and quail eggs. They are cooked in a large pan formed with circular dents throughout the surface, lending the appearance of a honeycomb. An initial dollop of batter is added to each hole, followed by a few pieces of the chosen stuffing. They are then covered in dough and flipped for even browning.

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## South Korea

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The Korean peninsula juts out from the north Asian continental landmass into the Yellow Sea on the west and the East Sea (or Sea of Japan) on the east. It is highly mountainous, its lowlands mainly along the west coast with pockets of fertile areas scattered across the country along the country's slow-flowing rivers. With its northern latitude and mountains, the Republic of Korea (popularly known as South Korea) has long cold winters and brief hot summers. However, the surrounding seas mitigate an inhospitable climate. The peninsula's southernmost tip and especially such islands as Jeju have warmer climates that make them tourist resorts.

Climate and landforms profoundly affect Korean cuisine. Seafood of every variety is a staple. In fishing areas, long lines of drying cuttlefish are ordinary sights and seaweed is a standard dish consumed at many meals. The country's mountain pine forests are used to grow many varieties of mushrooms used in all kinds of cookery and even attract Japanese tourist groups who come to pick them. And the cold climate and relatively short growing seasons meant that food preservation for long winters have always been important. Pickling is an art form for Korean cooks, the most famous being pickled and spiced vegetables called *kimchi*. So famous are the hundred or so varieties that Seoul has a whole museum dedicated to *kimchi*, and it is now found in grocery stores in many parts of the United States.

Many of the foods prepared, sold, and eaten on the street in South Korea represent its most internationally recognized dishes. This is notable for the fact that the varied street-food culture that thrives now on city streets and highway rest stops didn't widely exist before the 1960s. Up until then, the great majority of the unified country's population was rural, working on land near home. Food was produced and eaten at home, and eating out was not a part of the culture. Apart from simple taverns that existed during the period of Japanese occupation, even fixed restaurants and drinking establishments did not exist.

At the end of the Chosun Dynasty (1392–1897), about 3 percent of the Korean population lived in cities. That began to change during the period of Japanese Occupation (1910–1945) and especially during the Korean War (1950–1953) and its aftermath when Seoul became host to a vast population of refugees with no home to go to. The population surged further in the 1960s, during a period of intense industrialization spearheaded by then President Park Chung Hee. Street food was an essential component in that growth, offering cheap, easily accessible meals to the poor, working class, and displaced.

It was during this period of rapid growth that the *pojangmacha* first began to appear on city streets, to serve huge populations of displaced urbanites. The iconic venue for street food in Korea, the *pojangmacha* or “tented wagon” is a mobile kitchen that appears on city streets, in larger numbers at night. The vendors frequently provide benches or small stools for customers to eat in heated spaces enclosed in plastic curtains.

Initially, *pojangmacha* were drinking places. Soju or the lightly fermented rice brew *makkeoli* and later beer were accompanied by *anju*, snacks meant to be eaten with alcohol. Roasted sparrows, being cheap and easy to procure, were common and remained so up until the early 1990s, when a more diverse and varied mix began to appear, according to Michael J. Pettid, author of *Korean Cuisine: An Illustrated History*.

Today South Korea is one of the world’s most densely populated countries and its 15th largest economy. Street food thrives on its city streets and highways. In 2007, the Korea Street Food Vendor’s Association estimated the number of street-food vendors—encompassing smaller carts, stands, and *pojangmacha*—between 40,000 and 50,000, while the government put it at 12,351. A March 2012 CNN.go article placed the number of *pojangmacha* at 3,100. Today they cater to a broad customer base of office workers, students, late-night revelers, and tourists and provide a wide array of foods in settings both humble and elaborate, from small, stand-alone carts to large, full service semipermanent structures with varied menus.

The food offered at *pojangmacha* is cooked in full view of the customers and is often served on plastic plates encased in disposable plastic bags. Customers are seated at benches, or at small tables, and plastic curtains protect them from the elements. Interior spaces are heated in winter months. Often a roll of toilet tissue hangs from above to provide self-serve napkins. Some large *pojangmacha* feature water tanks filled with live octopus, sea cucumber, sea slugs, snails, and other sea creatures, and customers have the opportunity to choose those they would like the vendor to prepare.

The number of *pojangmacha* has declined in recent years, due to the efforts of government officials seeking to clear city space or regulate hygiene. In response, some vendors have organized. In 2011, the government corralled some 76 vendors operating in the tourist-heavy central Seoul neighborhood of

Insa-Dong into designated areas. In 2010, the Seoul-based Korea Street Vendors Confederation protested a government crackdown on street vendors and migrant workers in advance of the G20 summit. Three years earlier, they organized against attempts to restrict them to certain zones and operate within prescribed hours.

On the other hand, some *pojangmacha* operators have become so successful that they have franchised their operations. Recently, operators of permanent non-mobile establishments have begun calling themselves *pojangmacha*, taking on the name to conjure up nostalgic associations. These often serve as meeting places for young singles.

The variety and diversity of food available on the street in South Korea today have multiplied since the days of roasted sparrows. Rice cakes, *kimbap*, kimchi pancakes, skewered meats, and fish cakes are universal, but a global influence is increasingly apparent, particularly in Seoul and other large cities. One can find everything from hamburgers and hot dogs to Chinese dragon's beard candy, Turkish ice cream, and döner kebab. While Korean food itself has established its own international profile, so has its street food. In the United States, the neo-food truck movement of the first decade of the century was sparked in part by the Kogi BBQ truck in Los Angeles, a food truck serving a Korean–Mexican fusion of short rib kimchi tacos. This has come full circle as some enterprising vendors have begun selling kimchi tacos on the streets of South Korea.



Metal bowls full of various types of kimchi (fermented and highly seasoned vegetables) in a market in Suwon, South Korea. (Ehpoint/Dreamstime.com)

## Major Street Foods

### ***Ddeokbokki***

A dish that ironically originated in the royal palace during the Chosun Dynasty, this is perhaps the most popular food found on city streets, often served alongside other common dishes. Long, chewy cylindrical rice cakes called *garaetteok* are stewed in a fiery chili-based sauce alongside fish cakes (*odeng*) and vegetables. Other such items as hard-cooked eggs, dumplings (*mandu*), noodles, and meats are sometimes added. Sometimes *garaetteok* are grilled and sold plain.

### ***Odeng or eomuk***

Similar to the Japanese *oden*, *odeng* are fish cakes processed with wheat flour, threaded onto skewers, and cooked in a steaming, savory broth. As they simmer over hours, the broth becomes more flavorful. A complimentary cup of the broth is often offered on cold nights.

### **Kimbap**

The ubiquitous kimbap, adopted during the Japanese Occupation and derived from *makimono*, is composed of thin layers of pressed, dried seaweed (*kim*) rolled around steamed rice (*bap*) and various fillings such as bulgogi, fish cakes, egg, imitation crab, cucumbers, or kimchi or other pickled vegetables. Sliced into bite-sized disks, they are portable and easily eaten with the hands. It is not only the ideal street food, but a typical lunch, or light travel snack as well.

### **Sundae**

Sundae are deep-purple colored steamed blood sausages. Pig or cow intestines are stuffed with blood and cellophane noodles, and seasoned with garlic, green onion, or chili powder. Often served with other dishes such as *ddeokbokki* and *odeng*, or other offal such as liver or lungs, they are cut on the bias and eaten with toothpicks. Recipes vary from region to region and vendor to vendor, and in some, regional seafood-based versions are prepared. Sundae can also be incorporated in other dishes or as an ingredient in soups and stir-frys. There are restaurants that specialize in sundae that are frequently concentrated in particular areas.

### ***Dakkochi***

Skewered chicken chunks, glazed in a variety of sauces, including sweet honey based, salty soy based, or spicy chill and ginger. Grilled over coals, *dakkochi* are



among the most popular foods on the street in Korea, partly due to their portability. But other chicken parts—feet, gizzards, and hearts—are commonly sold.

## Other Street Foods

### *Beondegi*

*Beondegi* are silkworm pupae boiled or steamed, served in cups, and skewered with toothpicks. They are a high-protein snack commonly eaten with alcohol. They emit a powerful, shrimplike, nutty aroma that can be smelled from a distance from their steaming trays, sometimes before they come into view. Their brown exoskeleton softens when cooked, and when chewed, they emit a burst of hot briny liquid. With their insectoid appearance, they can seem startling to foreigners from countries where the consumption of insects is not common. Eating *beondegi* for the first time is often viewed as a rite of passage for tourists and expatriates living in Korea.

### Jeon

Crispy pancakes, griddled from rice or wheat flour, water, and sometimes eggs, with a variety of add-ins are common appetizers in restaurants, along with other *banchan* (side dishes). But jeon make endlessly variable appearances on the street as well. The green scallion pancake *pajeon*, sometimes incorporated with seafood, is the most common, but other popular varieties include *kimchi jeon*, made with kimchi, *yuk jeon*, with beef, and *haemul jeon*, which can include any combination of fish, shrimp, squid, or octopus. A relative, *bindaetteok*, is made with coarsely ground mung bean batter, which rises thick and fluffy and takes on an extra crispy exterior due to the crunchy beans. Jeon are eaten with chopsticks and often served with a dipping sauce of soy, vinegar, garlic, and chilies.

### *Twigim*

Analogous to Japanese tempura, *twigim* refers to items that are batter dipped and deep-fried; these can include meat, seafood, vegetables, and even kimbap.

### Other Sausages

A variety of sausages made from meat and fish appear on city streets skewered lengthwise and wrapped in all manner of foods, such as seaweed or bacon. Others are stuffed with rice cakes or cheese. Corn dogs and hot dogs encrusted with French fries are among the most popular, reflecting a growing Western influence on Korean street food.

## Dried Seafood

Cuttlefish, squid, filefish, or other species of sea life are pressed and dried. When ordered, the vendor heats the item on a grill to soften it. These are common drinking snacks.

## Other Roasted Foods

Corn on the cob, sweet potatoes, chestnuts, and ginkgos are all common items, roasted over coals.

## *Bibimbap*

The popular Korean rice salad is more common as a restaurant item or a dish eaten at home, but in certain markets, such as Seoul's Kwangjang Market, female vendors set up elaborate stands lined with deep bowls of ingredients and build the salad to order. These start with a bowl of rice and may include bulgogi, pickled vegetables, sprouts, cucumbers, mushrooms, spinach, carrots, often topped with a fried egg, and a spicy sauce made from chili paste (*gochujang*).

## *Heodduk*

A sweet pancake, made from wheat flour, water, milk, and yeast, and filled with a mixture of brown sugar, cinnamon, and nuts, is a popular wintertime street food. The raw dough is stuffed with the filling, which is then pressed flat on a grill. As it cooks, the sugar in the interior melts.

## *Bungeoppang*

Fish bread, or crucian carp bread," is named for a specific species of fish. The bread takes the form of that fish and is filled with a sweet red bean paste. Batter is poured into a heated cast-iron mold, the bean paste is added, and then more batter, before the mold is closed. The resulting pastry is light and fluffy, the interior hot and soft. Sometimes the cakes are made in other shapes such as flowers, eggs, and in reference to a popular children's cartoon character, piles of excrement.

## *Haeynyo*

One unusual expression of street food can be found along the beaches of South Korea's island province of Jeju. There a fishery run by the island's women has been well established for decades. The *haeynyo*, or literally "sea women," represent a matriarchal society in which the women developed a thriving fishery, while men—who would otherwise be taxed—stayed at home and cared for the children. These

wet suit-clad mermaids dive deep into the ocean holding their breath for long minutes and return to the surface with sea urchins, abalone, seaweed, and other products. In some beach areas, *haeynyo* set up tables and swim right up to the shore with their catch, serving sea urchins, snails, or small fish at plastic tables. This is a slowly disappearing way of life, as many of the *haeynyo* became so prosperous that they were able to afford to send their daughters to school on the mainland, and few remained to take after them.

*Mike Sula*

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## Spain

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Spaniards spend a great deal of time in the streets. It is an important part of their culture. It is in the streets of the towns and villages where some of the country's best food is to be discovered. Spanish street food is as original and diverse as Spanish regional food, carrying the same historical legacy. It may differ a great deal from what is found in New York, the Caribbean, or the torrid streets of Saigon or Shanghai, but remains a part of the great family of street food.

The influence of the cultural heritage of the Mediterranean region is seen everywhere as is that of the Atlantic Ocean, which from the 15th century onward made it possible to exchange food with the Americas. Spanish food is a cooking pot layered with original ingredients and different methods of cooking. It has been enriched since time immemorial by agricultural expertise and different culinary traditions brought to the country by foreign invaders: Phoenicians, Romans, Arabs, Moors,

and centuries later the French. The Romans gave Spain the best gift of all, irrigation. They planted grain on a large scale as well as vegetables and fruit, cultivated olives, and made wine from the local grapes. The Moors improved on the original Roman irrigation, converting barren land into rich orchards and rice paddies. They also introduced into the local diet saffron, “fideo” pasta and couscous, which Spaniards still call *alcuzcuz*. It was from the Arabs and the Moors that local people learned to enjoy food in the streets and to share food in a convivial and unconventional manner. During the long centuries in which they ruled Al-Andalus, the name the Arabs gave to Spain, Christian, Jewish, and Moorish food traditions were shared in streets and markets all over the country.

Starting at the end of the 15th century, new crops came from Central and South America, which improved the diet of the poor. The first arrivals were corn, capicum peppers, and beans. Later, potatoes were planted. Despite these changes, food remained scarce for much of the population well into the middle of the 20th century. The well-to-do drank chocolate made with sugar and dusted with cinnamon brought from Mexico by Spanish nuns. Later, this custom moved into the realm of street food to accompany *churros*, or fritters, a food with a Middle Eastern origin. Throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, regional food developed into the food eaten by Spaniards today, including street food. In the last 20 years, the influence of Spanish avant-garde chefs has also become evident in street food.

In Spain, geography and climate play a fundamental role in agriculture. The North is a world of mountains and pastureland, moody skies, and ever-changing seas. Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, and the Basque Country look out over the Atlantic Ocean. In the hinterland over the mountains, chestnut forests and apple orchards share space with grassy pastures, where beef and dairy cattle feed. There are also hundreds of small vegetable gardens planted with corn, runner beans, and tall cabbages. In local fairs and festivals, grilled sardines are as popular as the large beef cuts of rib, called *chuleton*, as well as *chuletillas*, little lamb cutlets grilled on metal *parrillas* over the hot embers of a fire. Moving east, Northern Navarre, Aragón, and Catalonia share borders and food culture with the Pyrenees and France. The food of East Catalonia, Levante, the Balearic Islands, and eastern Andalusia in the South belongs to Mediterranean Spain. *Calçots*, or large spring onions, are grilled in the streets of Tarragona in early April, while *cocas*, sweet or savory open pies, are bought in bread shops everywhere.

In Madrid, street sellers offer their customers the traditional *rosquillas del santo*, a sweet specialty that is eaten to celebrate the local Saint’s day. In Extremadura, on the border with Portugal, dried smoked red peppers are made into *pimenton*, which is the most common spice in Spain. *Pimenton* is used in the making of chorizo and other traditional Spanish sausages. It is also used in an array of such traditional street food made with meat as the *pinchitos morunos*, or Moorish kebabs,

usually made with pork instead of lamb. Some of the world's finest cured hams, which are always present on festive days, are made from the legs and shoulders of the *Ibérico*, an indigenous breed of pig that feeds on acorns in Extremadura and Andalusia. The first potatoes from the Americas were planted in Seville to embellish the gardens of hospitals and city buildings. Today the same potatoes are fried in the open air at fiesta time. In Spain, street food takes many shapes and is eaten on many different occasions.

## Major Street Foods

### **Churros (Fritters)**

*Churros* are fritters made of flour, water, and salt, fried in oil and served piping hot with sugar sprinkled on top. You can find them in the streets of North Africa as well as in Central and South America. In Spain, *churros* are sold in paper cones mainly in the *churrerías*, purpose-built shops often located close to local markets. Churros and a variation called *porras* are bought by the public in the morning to eat in the street or take home for breakfast. *Churros* are also fried on festive days



Close up view of a woman selling churros on the street in Valencia, during the Fallas Festival. (Mcxas/Dreamstime.com)

and at local fairs in mobile *churrerías*. Today many of the humble *churrerías* have been upgraded. Built into large modern trucks with state-of-the-art equipment, the traditional churros and hot chocolate can be seen on sale everywhere in the streets of Spain.

### **Castañas asadas (Roasted Chestnuts)**

Chestnuts, roasted in the streets on glowing braziers, herald the arrival of autumn in Spanish towns and cities. The custom of roasting chestnuts in a perforated iron pan over an open fire originated in villages that were close to chestnut forests. In the past, this was part of the evening entertainment for the long winter nights. Traditionally, they were sold by *castañeras*, women who spent their

evenings on street corners selling hot chestnuts by the dozen in small paper cones. In Catalonia, chestnut vendors also sell roasted sweet potatoes and sweet corn.

### **Octopus “a la Gallega” and “Empanada” Pie**

Local fiestas and Patron Saint celebrations are working days for street vendors. Galicia, a Celtic region in the northwest corner of the Iberian Peninsula, is where the best potatoes in Spain are grown. Here a national dish that is a popular treat on festive days is the *tortilla de patatas*, a thick egg omelet sold in large slices tucked inside a piece of local bread made from the same dough used to make *empanadas*. *Empanadas* are pies made with a wheat or maize flour dough. Traditionally, they are filled with salt cod, saffron, and sultanas, with cockles or even with mussels in a rich tomato and chili sauce. The classic empanada filled with tuna fish and a rich onion, parsley, and tomato sofrito is as popular as the *empanada de sardinillas*, tasty minute sardines. These pastries, cut into squares or triangles, are sold from any number of stalls during the local fiestas that take place at the end of every summer.

Another great Galician delicacy from the family of Spanish street food is *pulpo à feira* (octopus market style). Large octopuses are boiled in copper cauldrons until tender. Then they are cut into little slices with scissors and served warm, dressed with hot pimentón, sea salt, and olive oil. The *pulpo a la gallega*, served on a bed of delicious boiled potatoes, is a variation of the same recipe.

### **Snails**

In May, during the festival of the *L’Aplec del Caragol* (the Snail Festival), tons of snails are cooked in the streets of Lérida in Catalonia following traditional recipes. The snails are first boiled, then sautéed in large paella pans with olive oil, salt, and fresh herbs. Once they have been purchased, they are eaten hot at large communal tables, served with the pungent al-i-oli sauce made with olive oil and garlic. Snails *a la llauna* (roasted in a tin with a sauce of pounded garlic, parsley, and olive oil) are equally delicious.

### **Paella and Other Rice Dishes**

All over the Spanish Mediterranean coast, rice dishes cooked over wood fires in the open air have always been prepared by men on Sundays. Today, similar rice dishes cooked in a large metal paella pan with meat or seafood, vegetables, saffron, and *pimentón* have become a permanent feature in open markets and modern food courts in Spain and in many other countries. Street sellers tend to cook two different dishes at the same time: the traditional paella made with chicken and rosemary and the seafood rice, and *arroz de pescado y marisco* prepared with a rich stock,

prawns, and squid. Less authentic versions of the Paella, cooked with meat and seafood at the same time, are demanded by the public.

### ***Pescaíto Frito* (Fried fish)**

In Seville, fish fried at the local *freiduría* is taken away by customers to be eaten at home or in the street. Fifty or sixty years ago, these same shops fried fish only in the evenings, while in the mornings, they sold fresh fish to women to cook for the family at lunchtime. The menu has never changed: *Soldaditos de pavía* (cod fritters), *merluza* (large hake), *pijotas* (small hake), *acedias* (small sole), *calamares* (squid), and *chocos* (cuttlefish).

### ***Bocadillos de Calamares***

One of the most popular foods sold in the streets of old Madrid around the Plaza Mayor is a bread roll filled with piping hot fried squid rings. The *bocadillos de calamares* are bought from bars that have hatches that open onto the street.

## **Modern Spanish Street Food**

Today modern tapas as well as top-quality food products are sold from stalls in newly refurbished old markets and have become the face of modern Spanish street food. The Mercado de San Miguel in Madrid has recently been converted into a street food and market court. Inside, some stalls sell vegetables and fish, meat and sausages, coffee and tea, and others cook modern or traditional recipes, which until very recently were sold only in the traditional tapas bars. Creative chefs are behind some of the best tapas and exquisite *pintxos* (a piece of bread with something delicious on top supported by a tooth stick). Of Basque origin, *pintxos* bring the most original combinations of ingredients and food design into the realm of street food.

*María José Sevilla*

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## **Sri Lanka**

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The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, called Ceylon until 1972, is an island nation off the South East coast of India. There is strong evidence for human

settlement since 34,000 BCE whose descendants form the Wanniya-laeto (“people of the forest”) people. Aryan and Dravidian migrations (uncertain dating) from the Indian subcontinent established the Singhalese and Tamil populations respectively. Situated at the junction of the southwest and northwest monsoons across the Indian Ocean, and the source of prized spices—cinnamon and pepper—Sri Lanka became a major center for the exchange of goods between Arab and Chinese traders. As the spice wars and colonial enterprises of Europe entered the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka was colonized successively by the Portuguese in 1505, followed by the Dutch East India Company in 1602; the descendants of their marriages with Singhalese and Tamils formed the Burgher community. The British were the final colonizing power, ruling from 1815 until Sri Lanka was declared independent in 1948.

This multiethnic demography is reflected in modern Sri Lankan foodways with two main strands—foodways in common with its South Asian neighbors and foodways shared with European cultures.

Rice is the staple whole grain, and rice flour is the basis for the Southern Indian shared “breads”—*thosai* (*dosa* in Southern India, a flat pancake from a batter of fermented rice and urad dhal), *hoppers* (*appam* in Southern India, a bowl-shaped pancake from fermented rice flour), and *stringhoppers* (*idi-appam* in Southern India, thin rice noodles steamed on a bamboo mat). The generic term *curry* is commonly used to cover the range of dishes eaten with rice, both meat and vegetable, though some preparations retain such unique Sinhala names as *mallungs* (leafy greens, shredded, spiced, and steamed) or *baduns* (a meat preparation). Spicing is complex with several used in a single dish; the mix is flavor and for ascribed *ayurvedic* (medicinal) qualities. Coconut milk is the standard cooking liquid. Sambols and chutneys are eaten with the meal.

Wheat flour is used for European breads—loaves, rolls, buns—and sometimes in hoppers. Roasts, steaks, stews, chops, and baked and boiled vegetables make up the meals. The Portuguese and Dutch influences have been reduced to a handful of specialist meat dishes like *frikadells* (spiced meatballs), *smoore* (a pot-roast with a curry gravy sharpened with lime pickle), and cakes. More recently, Western fast food has taken its place within the daily diet.

Arab traders established the Moor community in Sri Lanka who have a distinctive sub-cuisine similar to that of the Moplah communities of Kerala, Southern India.

The other significant influence on Sri Lankan foodways is the dietary laws of Buddhism (the religion of the majority Singhalese population and generally vegetarian) and Hinduism (the religion of the Tamil population with a proscription against eating beef or strict vegetarianism for the more religiously committed).

Street vendors draw on food from across this spectrum. They are usually single-person operations, both male and female, and are unlicensed.



## Major Street Foods

### *Vadai*

At major transport hubs, in local shopping areas, at the beachside, *vadai* (also *wadde*, *vada* in Southern India) sellers station their glass-fronted wooden four-wheeled carts. There are two distinct types. *Masala vadai* are patties made of *toor* dhal (yellow lentils) that is soaked and then ground into a paste. It is spiced with curry leaves, onions, turmeric, salt, and Maldivian fish (smoked dried tuna), shaped in the palm and deep-fried. *Ulundu vadai* are made from a paste of parboiled rice and *urud* dhal (black lentils) fermented for several hours, spiced as for masala vadai, then shaped into a doughnut and deep-fried. Both are eaten on their own or with curd. *Issu* (prawn) *vadai* is a very popular variation on masala vadai: one or several small prawns are pressed into one side of the vadai before it's fried. Galle Face Green (the large seaside park where Colombo's families and courting couples go in the late evening on weekends to promenade, fly kites, and watch circus troupes) is famous for its *vadai* sellers, though now they compete with vans selling burgers, fried chicken, and pizza. But as night comes in, it's the *vadai* sellers' carts with their kerosene lanterns that make for magic.

### *Roti*

*Godamba roti* (similar to Malaysian *roti canai*) is made from wheat flour, salt, water, and oil, mixed to a soft dough, rested, cut into balls, then rolled out flat and flung like pizza dough till it is stretched and becomes almost translucent. At this point, it is dropped onto a hot griddle and cooked rapidly until firm but slightly elastic from the oil in the dough. Pieces of roti are broken off to scoop up accompanying curries and sambols. Egg godamba is made by breaking an egg onto the surface of the roti as it cooks and is folded. A relatively recent variation on godamba is *kottu roti*. A cooked godamba is chopped (*kottu* means chopped) into bite-sized pieces using two flat dough cutters or sharp knives. Spiced chopped vegetables or thinly sliced chicken or beef is quickly fried on the griddle, the kottu is added, and the whole is well mixed and served.

### Mutton or Fish Rolls

Dry mutton or fish curry is spread onto small thin pancakes. They are then rolled, dipped in egg and breadcrumbs, and fried. They are sold by *vadai* sellers or in small bakeries and cafés.

### *Achcharu*

At every bus terminus, outside every school or large office building sits the *achcharu amme*. Before her is a large chatty (earthenware cooking pot) that contains pieces

of fresh fruit mixed with green chilies, onion, vinegar, salt, chili powder, and a little sugar, making a fresh pickle. The fruit may be one or a combination of firm ripe mango, *veralu* (fat green Sri Lankan olives, another remnant of the Portuguese years), *amberalla* (golden apple or hog fruit), or pineapple. Once served in paper, it is now more usually served in a small plastic bag.

As a dry alternative, the fruit will be sliced and dipped into a mix of chili, salt, and sugar.

## Curd

Homemade pot-set *buffalo curd* is sold from roadside stalls throughout the country; that of the southeastern coastal plains is particularly prized. Paired with *kit-tul* (*Caryota urens*, commonly called fishtail palm) syrup, it is a perfect blend of sweet and sour.

## Other Street Foods

### Kadala and Gram

*Vadai* sellers will also often sell *kadala*, chickpeas that have been boiled, mixed with chopped Bombay onions, chili powder, salt, and a squeeze of lime. *Gram* (yellow lentils) is deep-fried and flavored the same way. Both are traditionally served in paper cones, but plastic bags and Styrofoam trays are often used now



Sri Lanka's street food incorporates both South Asian and European influences. A cook prepares traditional fast food in Colombo, Sri Lanka's largest city. (Ivan Tykhy/Dreamstime.com)

*Murukku*, a paste of rice flour and *urud* dhal flavored with asafetida, salt, and sometimes cumin or sesame seeds, will also be on sale. Lengths are extruded from a barrel through a range of metal disks perforated to produce a range of shapes. The lengths fall into hot oil and are rapidly deep-fried.

### ***Sarawath***

*Sarawath* is a mixture of shredded betel nut (areca nut), brightly colored candied grated coconut, cumin, and fennel seeds wrapped in a betel leaf cone. It's less potent than the usual way of eating betel nut where the nut is sprinkled on a betel leaf spread with lime paste. *Sarawath* sellers ply their trade from a wooden tray slung from their neck in which the cones stand upright to show the color of the coconut.

## **Drinks**

### **Sugarcane**

Sugarcane sold in arm-length pieces is chewed in one's mouth or crushed in a portable metal mill to release the sweet juice. It is a feature of the Hindu Vel festival held in July in honor of Lord Murugan during which carts in the form of towering temples are paraded through the streets, often decorated with bunches of sugarcane.

### ***Thambili***

*Thambili*—young king coconuts—are a common refreshing drink. The top is sliced off expertly with a machete, and the coconut water is drunk directly out of the shell, or through a straw to prevent the water spilling. The fruit is then halved with a swift blow, a scoop is fashioned out of the sliced off top, and the soft white flesh is eaten.

### ***Saruwath***

*Saruwath* is a popular drink of swollen gelatinous basil seeds, a sugar-based syrup (rose, orange, and lime flavors are popular), and water.

## **Sweets**

### ***Kalu Dodol***

*Kalu dodol* is a popular sweet, made by boiling down and cooling a mix of rice flour, coconut milk, and jaggery (palm sugar) till it becomes a thick batter, at which point cashew nuts and cardamoms are added. The mixture is reduced further and stirred until it comes away from the sides of the pan. It is then left to cool in a pan that is angled to let the coconut oil drain out. It is cut into firm jelly blocks and served.

## ***Bombai Muta***

Children are always entranced by the *bombai muta* (cotton candy) maker, as he spins the thin threads of luridly colored sugar round and round a stick.

*Paul van Reyk*

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## **Suriname**

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The Republic of Suriname is the smallest independent country on the South American continent. Historically and culturally, Suriname is part of the greater Caribbean Basin. On the north the country borders the Atlantic Ocean, on the east French Guyana, on the west Guyana, and Brazil to the south. In the 17th century, the first Europeans settled in the area. After a short period of British rule (ca. 1651–1667) from 1667 until 1975, Suriname was a Dutch colony, a plantation economy, with a strong focus on growing such cash crops as sugarcane, cacao, and coffee. During this period of almost 300 years, the country became a melting pot of cultures and religions that include indigenous peoples, Brazilians, Creoles (West Africans), Javanese, Dutch, Lebanese, Portuguese, Germans, Chinese, Indian Hindustanis, Jews, and French Huguenots. Suriname's official language is Dutch, but *Sranan Tongo*, a Creole language, is the lingua franca and commonly spoken. The vast majority of Suriname's population of around 520,000 people live on the coast in the capital city of Paramaribo. Following independence in 1975, a third of the population migrated to the Netherlands, where at present approximately 350,000 Surinamese are living. Historically, the contacts between Suriname and the Netherlands were always close, therefore, and at present, the community consists of populations (Surinamese people) living on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Surinamese cuisine is a melting pot. Ingredients, dishes, cooking techniques, and eating habits reflect the many different ethnic and religious groups of the population. The majority is of Asian Indian descent (roughly 40%), Creoles or Afro-Surinamese (30–35%), and Javanese (Indonesian (15%), and Maroons (descendants of runaway slaves who intermarried with indigenous peoples) make up 10 percent of the population. Other minorities include Jews, Chinese, Lebanese, Syrians, French, Dutch, and Germans.

Food, food preparation, and selling play a very important role in the daily and social life of the Surinamese community. A typical Surinamese meal consists of a

variety of dishes, all of different ethnic origin. Overall, it is popular belief and custom that dishes of different ethnic origins are best prepared by individuals of that ethnicity. Traditionally, cooking is learned at home, and it is still common to measure the skills of women through the quality of her cooking. Thus most Surinamese women have their own secret recipes and ingredients.

Although traditionally cooking and entertaining is done at home, Surinamese are used to buying takeaway foods and to snack in public. Cakes, fruits, sweet and savory snacks, bread rolls, sausages ice, and drinks—almost everything edible—are available as street foods. Stalls and vending to make a livelihood is a common phenomenon, and many women make a living by street, selling all kinds of home-made foods. At the Central Market on Paramaribo's Waterfront (*Waterkant*), numerous stalls and vendors sell street and snack food items, reflecting their rich and dynamic multicultural society. In addition, Surinamese love to party. No festivity or festival is complete without plenty to eat and drink. The *Bigi jari* (a birthday with a round (zero) number) is a big event, and *Keti Koti*, the abolition of slavery in 1863, is a national celebration with a display of the great variety of street foods in the Surinamese community on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Within the Surinamese community, street selling is considered an art. The stalls are often decorated with the national flag and lively Surinamese music from speakers. Male vendors and Creole women vendors, dressed in a colorful Koto (the traditional dress with a headpiece), lure pedestrians by promoting their merchandise in all sorts of verbal fashions, varying from shouting slogans to singing about the good quality of the food on sale to offering samples to passersby.

## Major Street Foods

### *Telo*

One of the major street-food items is *Telo*, strips of (precooked fresh or frozen) indigenous cassava that are rubbed with garlic and deep-fried in vegetable oil. The crispy (French fries-style) cassava strips are served sprinkled with salt and most often accompanied by *Bakkeljauw*. This is dried and salted cod fish, desalted in water, braised in oil, together with small pieces of onion, tomatoes, garlic, and (hot chili) pepper, until it is tender and falls apart. *Bakkeljauw* is also popular on a *Surinaams Puntje*, a (white) bread roll.

### Breads

Prior to its colonization, wheat and the use of an oven were unknown, so contemporary Surinamese breads and pastries reflect the colonial past and cuisines of such European countries as Great Britain and the Netherlands. The French baguette-style Surinamese bread roll is filled with almost everything, varying from potatoes to

noodles, minced meat, steak, chicken, shrimps, tofu, tempeh (Indonesian pressed soy cake); even the very typical Surinamese *Kousenband* (L. *Vigna unguiculata*), a yard-long (green) bean, is put between the bread roll, which is always eaten accompanied by *Zuurgoed* (pickles). Very often, a baguette is filled with leftovers from hot meals.

*Broodje Pom*, a derivation of *Pom*, is the national festive dish and one of the most popular bread rolls. *Pom* is a Jewish/Creole oven dish with three central ingredients: chicken, citrus juice, and *Pomtajer* (L. *Xanthosoma* spp., also known as *malanga* in many parts of the Caribbean). It became a Surinamese tradition, at celebrations and festive occasions, to serve both *Pom* and *Pastei*. The savory chicken pie is available in many sizes and always contains cooked peas and carrots. Other popular snacks of European origin include a mayonnaise-rich potato salad, (cold) stuffed tomatoes, and eggs.

## Hindustani Street Food

Toward the end of the 19th century, Indian (Hindustani) contract workers arrived in Suriname. Lacking traditional (atta) flour, they started to use wheat flour (and baking powder or *Rotisoda*—sodium bicarbonate) to produce their daily bread (*Roti*). In Suriname, the result is a soft flat wheat bread, often stuffed with potatoes or (yellow) split peas and closely related to the Indian *Paratha*. In Suriname, *roti* is one of the best-known street foods. Other popular Indian street foods include the *Bara*, a fritter from (self-raising) wheat flour, ground *Urdu* (black split peas), taro leaves, and cumin, eaten with a chutney; *Phulauri*, small deep-fried balls prepared with boiled yellow split peas, garlic, and cumin; and all sorts of *Samosas* or savory pastries with a vegetarian potato and curry (masala) fillings.

## Condiments

Surinamese love condiments, and most foods are accompanied by pickles and hot pepper sauces of multiple origins. The popular condiment *Gekruide Ketjap* (spiced soy sauce) can be traced back to the Javanese migrants bringing with them Indonesian *Ketjap* (soy sauce). Deep-fried spring rolls and *Kroepoek* (Javanese Krupuk or prawn crackers), and *Lemper*, sticky rice filled with braised chicken wrapped in banana leaves, are common. *Satays* are marinated meats cooked on skewers over an open flame with peanut butter sauce (*saté met pinda*—or *satésaus*). The same sauce also accompanies *Baka Bana* (Indonesian: *Pisang Goreng*), slices of plantain, dipped in a batter and deep-fried. Well known is also *Spekkoek* (literally “bacon cake”), which is an Indonesian sweet cake with thin layers in different colors.

Chinese migrants introduced the use of ginger and the stir-frying technique, which over the years resulted in numerous typical Surinamese street foods varying from stir-fried noodles, Chinese cabbages, (smoked) pork, beef, and duck.

Plantain chips (or crisps) and potato chips are common. The indigenous people's contribution to the Surinamese street-food repertoire is flat cassava bread (from shredded and dried cassava) and *Casripa* (or Casiri), a thick boiled cassava juice or syrup that has multiple uses, that is, often served as a condiment or used as a cooking liquid.

### Sausages

Sausage sellers are a common phenomenon along Paramaribo's Waterfront, on street corners, and in the Dutch Surinamese communities. Several Creole Surinamese families are famous for selling the spiced sausages *Vleesworst* (beef sausage with a coarse structure) and *Bloedworst* (or black pudding: a dark fine-structured beef blood sausage). The long sausages, in a bovine intestinal casing, are boiled in a spiced broth, cut into pieces, and served in a plastic tray, the pieces eaten warm (pushed out of the casing) with a relish. Most often, the sellers offer boiled *Fladder* (beef tripe) and *Beré*, the boiled large intestine of a cow, and sometimes also sausages from chicken blood.

### Surinamese Pickles

Almost every Surinamese woman has her own recipes for *Zuurgoed*, pickles, and relishes that accompany almost every meal. Apart from being eaten with hot foods and bread rolls, *Zuurgoed* is consumed as a snack. The pickling of fruits and vegetables is a widespread domestic activity and a Surinamese tradition. Using such ingredients as cucumbers, peppers, red onions, and the small round light green Birambi (*L. Averrhoa bilimbi*), from the home garden or bought at the market, pickled in vinegar with herbs and spices, pickles are widely on sale in stalls run by pickle sellers.

### Cakes

Surinamese women are known to raise their children alone. During the slavery period (1667–1873), families were torn apart by the Dutch. Ever since, it is very common for Afro-Surinamese (Creole) women to raise their children alone and sell cakes and food to support their family. The cake sellers carry the plates of cakes on their heads and often sell *Bojo* (flourless shredded cassava coconut cake), *Keksi* (yellow cake), *Fiadu* (cinnamon roll or Danish), *black cake* or *Bolo Pretu*—dark cake moistened with liquor (Rum or Amaretto) and a distant cousin of the British moist Christmas or Plum pudding. Popular cookies are *Maizenakoekjes* (*Gomakuku* flourless corn flour cookies) and *Pindakoekjes* (Peanut cookies), both kinds commonly sold in small transparent (round) plastic containers.

## Beverages and *Schaafijs*

Surinamese love color. Red, yellow, blue, and green liquid colorings are frequently used for the decoration of pastry and the flavoring of soft drinks. Sugar syrups made from almonds, roses, tamarind, ginger, and tropical fruits such as *Mar-koeza* (passion fruit), pineapple, and coconut are highly popular. Selling *Schaafijs* (“shaved ice”) is a Surinamese specialty, and cart vendors sell the crushed ice flavored with sugar syrups. A fresh (green) coconut, with a straw, is a popular thirst quencher. The most popular Surinamese Indonesian drink *Dawat* is prepared from palm sugar and coconut milk, most often with rose syrup added, giving the cold drink a pink color. *Skrati*, made from bars of pure cacao beans, is diluted with water and flavored with sugar and (condensed) milk. *Zuurwater* is the Surinamese equivalent of (American) lemonade. *Gemberbier* (ginger beer) is a popular nonalcoholic drink made from fresh, grated ginger, sugar, clove, lemon acid, and water. Local brands sell bottled ginger beer, regular (malt) beer known as *Parbo Bier*, and especially red, green, and yellow colored soft drinks made by the Fernandes brand enjoy popularity.

*Karin Vaneker*

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## Switzerland

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Switzerland is a small country located on the borders of France, Germany, Austria, Italy, and Liechtenstein. It is most famous for the Alps Mountains that dominate the southern part of the country and the Jura chain in the northwest. In fact, Switzerland has a variety of landscapes and even climate variations. Most of the country’s cities are on a large plateau between the mountains, and here the climate is much like the rest of Central–Western Europe. Major European rivers begin in Switzerland’s mountains, including the Rhine, Rhone, Ticino, and Inn. The valleys can be warm, and wine grapes are grown on hill slopes in the Valais. Switzerland also has famous lakes where climates are more temperate than the glacial mountains: Lake Geneva on the French border on the west and Lake Constance next to Germany on the north. Small farms have long been the mainstay of Swiss agriculture, the most famous product being dairy—as in cheeses such as Gruyère, Emmenthaler, and other varieties that are known internationally as “Swiss Cheese.”



Because the country has broad rivers, valleys, and passes over the Alps to the south, it has always been a crossroads for travelers and settlers. Switzerland is really a confederation of independent states, called cantons, each of which speaks one of the country's four official languages. Swiss German is the main language of the north and center, and most Swiss speak a dialect of a Swiss version called *Schwyzerdütsch*. Zurich, Bern, and Basel are cities in this linguistic zone. French is the language of the west, especially Geneva, Lausanne, and Lucerne. Italian is spoken in the south, and in the mountainous south, a Romance language called Romansh. Although such traditional culture as folklore and religious practices differs from region to region, a good deal of food is eaten in common across the country. Some items are very German, such as pretzels and sausages; others are French such as crepes and some cheeses.

Switzerland is one of the world's richest countries, so street food is not a basic necessity of life as it is in lesser developed nations. It is, however, enjoyed because of its high quality, and it is part of everyday Swiss culture. Public dining is also a feature of fairs and festivals. Much of it is hearty as befits a country that prizes outdoor activities and its ethic of hard work.

## Major Street Foods

### Pretzels

Called *brezel* in German, these are raised wheat-flour dough, formed in the traditional "crossed arms" shape and baked until golden brown. Swiss pretzels are neither like the packaged hard ones sold in American stores, nor exactly like the soft ones sold at American fairs or on streets of cities like Philadelphia (where they are a classic street food). Instead, the Swiss *brezel* is large, soft, and very chewy. Not only are there all kinds of toppings available, but it can be cut horizontally and filled with interesting ingredients. The most popular is cheese, but tuna and ham are also widely consumed. The most famous chain is Brezel Koenig (Pretzel King).

### Sausages

Swiss sausage makers are world famous, and several versions are sold from stands in all parts of the country. The most beloved sausage comes from St. Gall, called *St. Galler Kalbsbratwurst*. It is a thick pale sausage made from veal, some bacon, and a little milk and is normally grilled. It is served with slices of thick bread or inserted into a crusty pretzel-like bun in the style of hot dogs. A horseradish-laced mustard is the most common topping (in St. Gallen, it is eaten plain). *Cervelat* is almost

equally popular. Made from beef, pork, and bacon, this large sausage (usually four ounces) can be boiled, fried, or grilled. One special sausage called *longeole* is served from stands at such festivals as the Escalade in Geneva during December. This is a huge pork sausage that is heavily spiced with fennel among others, cooked with potatoes and lentils, and served in thick slices with bread. The best time to sample sausages on the street is the national *wurstfest* held in November.

## Crepes

Crepes are very popular in Switzerland. They are served from mobile trucks, and there are many kiosks in places like train stations that sell crepes to commuters and other travelers. Crepes are thin pancakes made on the spot and usually rolled up with fillings and sometimes toppings. Some are savory, meaning that they are filled with cheese or even chopped meats. The most popular are sweet crepes whose fillings include jams and the sauce that the Swiss love most—*apfelmus* (applesauce). Toppings usually include cinnamon and powdered sugar.

## Marroni (Chestnuts)

When the cold season starts, *heissi marroni* (hot chestnuts) vendors appear on streets in every city and town. Large tubs heated with hot charcoal are set up, and the chestnuts are slowly roasted until they are cooked through and soft inside. To eat them, the soft shell must be opened to get at the nutmeat. The smell and taste of roasted chestnuts are sweet and perhaps not familiar to people who have not become accustomed to eating them. But they are the great indigenous Swiss street food because of the chestnut tree-forested mountains of the country's south.

## Magenbrot (Stomach Bread)

This is a thick, spicy, crispy cookie from northern Switzerland sold on streets during festival time when there is a lot of heavy food eaten on the street. Made with ginger, cinnamon, and cloves, it is called “stomach bread” because spices in it are thought to settle the stomach after overeating. Folklore is not wrong because ginger is widely used to treat nausea and digestive distress.

## Panini and Flatbreads

*Panini* is an Italian sandwich that is sold from trailers and from fixed kiosks. One way to serve them is cold, as a sandwich filled with such Italian ingredients as *prosciutto* and cheese, but Swiss vendors often grill them in a special press and serve the sandwich warm. *Piadina* is a flatbread from central Italy that has made its way to such Swiss cities as Zurich. It is a flat disk of dough that is cooked on a

flat griddle until it has blackened spots on it. The *piadina* is then filled with various ingredients, from ham to cheese, folded over, and served warm. Pizza slices are also quite popular, though made and sold from small open-fronted kiosks in urban locations.

## Kebabs

Like many other places in Europe, Turkish/Middle Eastern kebabs have become popular street food everywhere. Kebabs can be made from chunks of lamb, beef, or chicken skewered on rods plain or with tomatoes, onions, and peppers. The most popular are *döner kebabs*, the Turkish version of gyros. Large skewers of compressed meat—often veal in Switzerland—is set on a horizontal grill and cooked. Thin slices of meat are cut from the skewered meat, set on a thin flatbread, and served with lettuce, tomatoes, and a choice of sauces ranging from spicy hot to mild and creamy. Probably the best known are on Zurich's Langstrasse (long street), an area that has become well known for ethnic foods and a go-to place when visiting the city.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## Syria

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The Syrian Arab Republic is bordered by Turkey on the north, Iraq on the east, Jordan on the south, and Israel, Lebanon, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west. The country's 18 million people are about equally divided between urban and rural, and some 90 percent are Muslim. From the early 16th century to the end of World War I, Syria was part of the Ottoman Empire, and the Turkish influence is apparent in the cuisine.

Much of Syrians' protein comes from dairy products and pulses, particularly chickpeas and lentils. The main meats are lamb and chicken and, to a lesser degree, goat and beef. The largest city is Aleppo, with a population of 2.3 million, followed by the slightly smaller capital Damascus. Both cities had a rich and vibrant street-food life, which, like other aspects of life, has been disrupted by the current uprising. The main street foods are very similar to those found throughout the region: falafel, *shawarma*, fruit drinks, and various kinds of bread.



Making sundaes at Bakdash Ice-cream Parlor in Damascus, Syria. (Angela Ostafichuk/Dreamstime.com)

## Major Street Foods

### *Shawarma*

One of the world's most popular street foods, in Syria, *shawarma* is made by threading thin pieces of lamb or chicken onto a long skewer that is placed in front of a vertical grill and rotated over heat for several hours. In Damascus, some *shawarma* makers wear spotless white outfits and make a great show of cutting the meat. They often use the bread to turn the tower of meat as revolves around the spit, then baste the bread in the meat juices, and cook the whole sandwich on the grill. It is served on a single piece of round, unleavened bread and topped off with a dollop of garlic mayonnaise and slices of sour pickle. The bread is rolled up and wrapped in wax paper.

### *Fuul*

This soupy mix of chickpeas, lemon juice, and fava beans is a popular breakfast meal. It is served from small carts with a large colander in the middle containing the *fuul*, which is spooned into a pottery dish and eaten by the customer on the street.

Another common street food is *fuul nabit*. Fava beans are soaked for several days until they sprout, then boiled with crushed garlic, lemon juice, and cumin powder.

## Shawarma

"I ate the best shawarma I think I will ever have . . . It came from al-Mousali, a road-side emporium with a few plastic chairs, in the Jazmatiyeh district of Damascus. The meat was beef, unusually. It was as flavoursome as the roast at the Savoy Grill. It came in a delicate sauce of sour pomegranate. It

was wrapped in evanescently thin laffa bread, and came with fresh vegetables and tankards of just-squeezed fruit juice."

Tim Franks, BBC Mideast correspondent <http://syrianfoodie.blogspot.com/2009/07/eat-and-drink-in-damascus-what-lonely.html>

The beans are served in a glass or china bowl rather than a paper plate, and the liquid is served separately in a glass with half a lemon as a side drink. The bean is squeezed from the skin, which is discarded.

*Falafel*, deep-fried chickpea balls with a crunchy outside and soft interior, is wrapped in flatbread and served with tomato and onion slices.

In the spring, vendors sell whole green almonds from carts, and in the summer prickly pears and whole fresh pistachios. Juices made from mulberry, licorice, pomegranate, and other seasonal fruits are sold by vendors with pots strapped to their backs or at corner stalls.

In the summer, ice cream is very popular. The most famous vendor in Damascus is Bakdash Ice Cream in the Souk Hamidiyah in the Old City, known for its home-made ice cream and freshly crushed pistachio toppings.

A specialty of Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, is Kebab bil-krayz: lamb kebab served in a rich and tangy sauce made from local cherries. Aleppo is also famous for its pastries, including *batlawa*, which is made with sugar syrup, not honey, and laced with rose or orange blossom on water.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Taiwan

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*Taiwan* (officially the *Republic of China*) is an island nation located across the Taiwan Strait 110 miles off the southeastern coast of China. It consists of the island of Taiwan (formerly known as Formosa), which forms more than 99 percent of its current territory, as well as several smaller islands. About 98 percent of the 23 million Taiwanese are of Chinese ancestry; the rest are Taiwanese aboriginals. Nearly half of the population lives in five cities: Taipei, New Taipei, Kaohsiung, Taichung, and Tainan. Between 1895 and 1945, Taiwan was a dependency of Japan. All these influenced its cuisine.

Some of the finest food in Taiwan can be found in the night markets, which have seen tremendous popularity over the past 30 years or so. Formerly, street food was sold from moving carts, but now many vendors are consolidated into specific areas. These markets, which do most of their business after hours, usually sell more than just food. In Taipei and Kaohsiung, night-market vendors are sometimes owners of regular brick-and-mortar restaurants that extend their selling area during the evening hours by putting stands on the street or unfurling awnings to create small and separate eating and serving spaces. The customers represent a broad cross section of Taiwanese society, especially young people for whom night markets are places that are well-lit, safe, and fun. There is more of a balance between male and female vendors than in South East Asia.

In Taipei, Shilin Night Market is a well-established destination for locals and tourists, with designated train stops, a tourist office, and other encouragements to increased traffic. In Kaohsiung, Liuhe Night Market offers a spectacular array of *xiaochi* (small eats) and a number of exotic food items, including snake meat. Although it's a regular city street by day, at night, there are barriers set up to block autos.

An important part of the night markets' offerings are *xiaochi*, or small eats, which are actually substantial snacks along the lines of Spanish tapas. These are often innovative blends of local and foreign cuisine, and some night markets are famous for their special *xiaochi*.



Traditional Taiwanese snack of stinky tofu. (Chi-ayiwangworks/Dreamstime.com)

## Major Street Foods

### Stinky Tofu

The most memorable of the foods sold in Taiwanese night markets is stinky tofu. Fresh firm bean curd is fermented in a brine solution of meat and/or vegetable juices for as long as several months until the preparation turns a white, relatively flavorless and odorless substance into a brown, intensely smelly mouthful. Usually grilled or fried, stinky tofu is sometimes served with hot sauce or pickled cabbage that stands up to its flavors. The inside is surprisingly fluffy and soft.

### Beef Noodle Soup

Most Taiwanese, when asked to name their favorite foods, will

likely list beef noodle soup. The soup is predictably simple and satisfying. To enjoy it as the Taiwanese do, take a bowl at the midpoint or end of the meal rather than the beginning.

### Skewered Meat

Many street stands in Taipei and Kaohsiung serve rolled pork, chunks of beef, and organs such as chicken hearts on skewers. Frequently, the meat is uncooked until it's ordered; buyers select the items they want by placing them in small baskets that they hand to the vendor who grills them to order.

### Pig's Blood Cake

Served on a stick or in individual patties, this sometimes rather mild-tasting street-eat is composed of sticky rice soaked in pig's blood, steamed, bathed in a pork soy broth, rolled in crushed peanuts, and perhaps sprinkled with herbs. These magenta-colored cakes are cut into rectangles (or sometimes served on popsicle sticks) and benefit from a dash of hot sauce.

## Tea

Though alcohol is a rather uncommon sight in street markets, it is served at permanent restaurants that have extended their presence into the streets. More popular than alcohol, however, is tea, which is a major product of the island. Taiwan currently produces a range of teas, including somewhat surprisingly, Assam, which is an Indian variety brought to the island by the Japanese who encouraged its production, believing it to be more competitive than green tea in Western markets. But the signature leaf on Taiwan is oolong, and the wide range of geographical variation on the island permits the cultivation of many different varieties of this tea.

## Other Street Foods

### Bubble Tea

Also called Pearl Milk Tea, this beverage originated in tea shops in Taichung in the 1980s. It generally contains tea, some fruit juice, milk or nondairy creamer, and the all-important tiny balls of chewy tapioca. Usually served cold rather than hot, the namesake bubbles are sucked up through oversized straws specially designed to accommodate the squishy balls.

### Fatty Pork Sausages

Sausages are a common sight in many Asian food markets. In Taiwan, the most popular are fatty pork sausages, which are just what their name implies: chunks of pork with a hefty dose of pork fat. Fatty pork sausages are frequently grilled and served on a stick pushed lengthwise through the sausage.

### Quail Egg with Shrimp

Taiwanese street markets are open to such innovative food offerings as quail egg and salty shrimp, with a sprinkle of herbs, sharp Japanese-style pickles, and a squirt of cream served in a small pastry shell. A chunk of fresh pineapple can be added for sweet-savoriness, and this dish is a good example of some of nontraditional, highly imaginative minor offerings available at Taiwanese food markets.

## Fruit

Travel literature issued by Taiwanese tourism agencies tout the country as the “Kingdom of Fruit,” and there’s no doubt that Taiwan is home to a vast range of fruits, sold whole or in cut-up sections in markets throughout the island. Some of the more popular and distinctive varieties include



- **Durian.** Though not unique to Taiwan, durian is popular on the island. Durian is one of those foods that, like stinky tofu, is challenging for Westerners to appreciate (and perhaps even harder to eat). The fruit emits what is for many an off-putting scent of sweetness and sulfur. Though it may be an acquired taste, those who have pushed past the smell seem almost addicted to the fruit.
- **Buddha's head.** Also called cherimoya, and native to the Americas, this large green fruit has thick flesh that's similar to papaya or mango, very tasty and refreshing. The name derives from the artichoke-like layers of leaves that are reminiscent of the way the Buddha's head is sometimes portrayed in Asian art.
- **Lychees.** Though it's likely they were brought to Taiwan by the Japanese, lychees are now eaten in the street and in restaurants. Their popularity attests to the extraordinary ability of Taiwan to accept, assimilate, and make the products of other countries their own.

*David Hammond*

### Further Reading

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## Thailand

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The *Kingdom of Thailand* is located in the center of the Indochina peninsula in Southeast Asia. Unlike other countries in Southeast Asia, it was never subject to foreign rule. It has an area of 198,000 sq mi and a population of 64 million people. About 75 percent of the population is ethnically *Thai*, 14 percent is of *Chinese* origin, 3 percent is ethnically *Malay*, and the rest belong to minority groups including *Mons*, *Khmers*, and various *hill tribes*. Around 95 percent of the population are Buddhists.

Thailand has one of the most exciting street-food cultures in Asia. Whereas people in West tend to eat three relatively large meals every day, people in Thailand and other Asian countries generally eat a number of relatively smaller meals throughout the day. This habit is conducive to the development of a strong culture of street food, which is portioned out in small quantities that can be munched on the run.

However, according to David Thompson in his *Thai Street Food*, street food is a relatively recent phenomenon that really came to the fore in the 1960s as Thais left their family homes and farms and moved to cities in search of employment. Women especially played a large role in the markets as men pursued other careers, and today most Thai street-food vendors are women, in contrast with Singapore and other countries in Southeast Asia. Another influence on Thai street food has been the wave of Chinese migration in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Housed in communal accommodations, they ate on the streets. Their lasting legacy is the many noodle shops and vendors in Thai cities.

Although the Theravada Buddhism practiced by most Thais does not prohibit the eating of meat except as a voluntary practice, many Thai food vendors sell vegetarian preparations that can be very easily modified to be exclusively vegetable (for instance, the classic papaya salad, which can be prepared without fish sauce or crabs). In deference to the dietary concerns of the Muslim minority, pork does not have strong presence in Thai street markets as it does in Singapore and Hong Kong.

Street-food vendors are ubiquitous in Thailand. Some have mobile carts ranging from old-fashioned baskets on their shoulders (now disappearing) to motorbikes attached to portable kitchens. Mobile vendors follow the same route every day. Others have semipermanent setups in markets, on busy thoroughfares, or in front of shops. Many have tables and chairs for their customers. Often vendors selling different items cluster together.

Everyone in Thailand stops at street-food vendors: kids in T-shirts, men in business suits, and women getting a quick bite while out shopping. Because a traditional Thai meal consists of many small dishes, working women short of time often buy some items on the street to take home and include in the family meal. The availability of plastic bags makes it possible to carry such foods as soup and curries home.

From an efficiency standpoint, it makes sense to have somewhat labor-intensive Thai food prepared by a person devoted to making one thing all day long. To make

### Street Food as Religious Donation

Most Thais are Buddhists, and at some stage, they are supposed to spend time as monks, who must beg for their food. Giving food or alms to a monk gives the faithful an opportunity to acquire merit. Around dawn, monks leave their temples

and make their morning rounds of the street markets. Some stallholders give their wares to the monks, others purchase it for them. Vegetable curries, rice, noodles, and sweet dishes are the most popular dishes.

a papaya salad at home, for example, would require at least one hour of chopping and pounding and probably a lot of leftover ingredients. Moreover, a papaya salad can be purchased on a Bangkok street for less than one U.S. dollar.

With a population of 8.4 million (and nearly 15 million in the greater metropolitan region), Bangkok accounts for nearly a quarter of Thailand's population, and many of the residents live in relatively modest apartments. They do not always have stoves and other cooking appliances, and even if they do, it is very hot to cook at home in Thailand's climate. This is why there is such an active night market: Once the sun goes down, people come out and eat food prepared in the cool night air by others.

## Main Markets

While there are small pockets of street vendors everywhere in Bangkok, several larger markets are noteworthy:

- **Suan Lum Night Bazaar.** Like many night markets, it is a source for more than just food, but from around 5:00 P.M. until midnight, there's a huge range of local chow.
- **MBK** is a mammoth galleria-style shopping center with an indoor food court offering many traditional street foods with prices and safety standards that are higher than on the street. It's also air-conditioned, so while some of the gritty charm of street eating is lost, the customers gain comfort and security.
- **Chatuchak** is a weekend market that covers almost 40 acres and has more than 15,000 vendors.
- **Floating markets** are found in several Thai cities, and although they attract many tourists, you can get some good tastes if you make the effort to eat the food locals are eating.

The preferred method of preparation is grilling. Although some dishes, like salads and fruit snacks, can be prepared by simply cutting and seasoning and perhaps vigorously pounding raw materials, the grill is a common sight in Thai markets. Preparing food over an open fire has the added advantage of attracting buyers by spreading delicious smells throughout the air.

Aside from vendors established in food courts or brick-and-mortar structures, the vast majority of Thai street vendors seem to be folks who set up shop on the street, using tables, cooking appliances, and ingredients that can be reasonably mounted on a motor scooter (and we've seen Thai motorists carrying gravity-defying quantities of material on a single scooter).

Some characteristics of Thai food could help allay sanitation concerns. Much food has been subjected to open fire and contains chili heat and acidity that may reduce potentially dangerous food-borne bacteria. Although some vendors pull on gloves before serving, it requires a small leap of faith-in-sanitation practices to order street food in Bangkok. Running water at on-the-street vendors is rare. An exception is the food court in MBK, where it's easier for health inspectors to keep an eye on things.

## Major Street Foods

With the vast range of street foods available in Thailand in general and Bangkok specifically, it's difficult to narrow the major foods to just a handful, but some trends are evident.

### Salads

Though it may be wise to avoid raw fruit and vegetables served on the street, many wonderful salads are sold.

- Papaya salad (*som tom*) is an iconic Thai dish that features on the menus of most North American Thai restaurants. Into the mortar and pestle go green papaya threads and other ingredients, such as chili peppers, small limes (so delicate that they can be eaten whole), tomatoes, green beans, bean sprouts, some herbs, and salt. The street chef pounds these foods until the juices run together into a beautiful, aromatic, crunchy, and tastefully cohesive mess. (In North American restaurants, the ingredients are sometimes not properly muddled to ensure the flavors flow and merge.)
- Smoked catfish salad (*larb pla dok*) leverages a fish that in North America is frequently ignored but which in Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia is honored as a delicious addition to the table.
- Grilled beef salad. In addition to the grilled meat, it contains lime, chili, and sugar, as well as shallots, mint, and onion.
- Long bean noodle salad includes papaya, chilies, and the very long namesake beans (also called “snake beans”). The beans are cut and pounded together with the papaya and chilies to release and marry with the flavors. Palm sugar, lime juice, freshwater crabs, and tomatoes may be added at the end.

### Grilled Fish and Meat

Grilled foods include plump fish, dusted with salt and stuffed with herbs; chicken, beef, and pork on skewers (called from the Malay *sateh*, and *satay* in the

English-speaking world); spicy Thai sausages (sometime stuffed with meat, sometimes with rice only); and vegetables. The protocol for ordering is to select several skewers by placing them in a basket and handing it to the vendor to cook. After the items are grilled, the vendor places them in a box or bag. Most Thais like to accompany the grilled meat with glutinous rice and chili sauce, which is served in small plastic bags to take home or can be added directly to the food.

## Seafood

Thailand has an extensive coastline, so that in addition to fish, there is a vast collection of crustacean products available that are eaten both raw and cooked.

- Oyster omelets are a cooked egg or pancake dough with oysters either mixed in or sprinkled on top. Hot sauce can be added to taste.
- Cockles are displayed in large flat trays and served in plastic bags with a shot of salt and hot sauce.
- Crabs, some quite large, are available both raw and cooked. Some work is required to extract the meat, so some people like to share them with a friend and take turns picking away at them.

## Noodles

Noodles have been called the hamburger of Thai street food: simple, satisfying, cheap, and available everywhere. Noodle vendors generally specialize in this one food item. Rice is the predominant raw material for Thai noodles known as *kanom jin*, though some vendors prepare egg and mung bean noodles. Noodle shops open early and are closed by mid-afternoon. Most stalls sell several varieties of sauce to accompany the noodles. Diners are supposed to specify what kind of noodles they want and the ingredients. The most popular delivery system for many of Thailand's noodles is soup, though there are some dry noodle dishes.

- Wonton noodles are served along with meat and vegetable and a large array of condiments.
- Spicy noodles are served from carts that present buyers with a range of condiments they can add even without chilies, and the noodles can be pretty spicy.

The most famous Thai noodle dish served in all Thai restaurants as well as street carts is *pad thai*: thin rice noodles fried with pieces of tofu, dried shrimp, shallots, and eggs, flavored with fish sauce, tamarind, and sugar, and topped with ground

## Thai Sauces

Thais like to mix and match, especially when eating noodles. The most traditional accompaniment to rice noodles is *nahm ya*, a thick spicy sauce made from fish, dried chilies, *shallots*, garlic,

lemongrass, and wild ginger. Another popular sauce is *nahm prik*, a smoky sauce made from grilled chilies, shallots, garlic, and mung beans that is eaten with vegetables.

peanuts and bean sprouts, with a slice of lime and crisp vegetables on the side. Some vendors sell mussel omelets as an accompaniment.

## Curry

Curry is one of the most iconic Thai dishes. The Thai word for curry, *gaeng*, means “any wet savory dish enriched and thickened by a paste.” The starting point is an aromatic curry paste that contains shrimp paste (*kapi* or *gapi*) chilies, *ginger*, coriander root, basil, and other spices. The ideal is to achieve a balance of hot, sour, salty, and sweet flavors in both an individual dish and a meal. As Thai food expert David Thompson writes:

In a good Thai curry, each flavor should be tasted to its desired degree and no one flavor should overshadow another. The striving for a complex balance of ingredients is nowhere more apparent than in curries: robustly flavoured ingredients are melded and blended together into a harmonious, yet paradoxically subtle and cohesive whole.

Coconut-milk-based curries are prevalent in Bangkok and Central Thailand, and water-based curries are more common in northern Thailand. Thai curries are categorized by the color of the paste used in their preparation: red, made with red chilies and Indian spices; yellow, made with turmeric and curry powder; green, containing fresh green chilies, basil leaves, lime leaves, and often round green eggplants; Panang/Penang with dried red chilies, white pepper, and sometimes peanuts; and Mussaman curry, containing dried red chilies and aromatic spices. Depending on the kind, curries can be accompanied by rice, rice noodles, or *roti*, a flat, round bread made with white flour that is of South Asian origin.

## Soups

A remarkable feature of Thai soups is the range of flavors and textures contained within a single bowl. It is not uncommon to have a soup that holds slivers of meat, a fried wonton skin, noodles, bean sprouts, fish balls, and vegetables. Unlike in

the West where a meal starts with soup, in Asia, it is more traditional to have soup at some point near the end of the meal. Soups served on Thai streets include the following:

- Though pork in the form of belly or other meats seems less common than chicken or beef, Thai pork noodle soup is a Thai street classic. It is made by adding rice noodles to pork with pork broth, bok choy, dried shrimps, sugar, chilies, and other ingredients.
- Noodle soup may be the most popular street food in Thailand. It is a kind of comfort food and quite simple, as the meat-based broth is perked up with simple condiments.
- Hot and sour chicken soup may be presented in a clear broth or in a broth made creamy by the addition of coconut milk. Redolent of lemon grass, this soup is perked up with cherry tomatoes and chilies.

## Other Street Foods

Thai street foods are so vast in their range that almost anything that grows in this country will, at one time or another, be represented on the streets of this country. A number of lesser known foods are worthy of attention.

### Sticky Rice

Though not as visually arresting as green papaya salad or grilled fish, sticky rice is a staple in many Thai markets, and it's an easy grab-n-go item by itself or as an add-on with a larger dish. Though it contains no dietary gluten, sticky rice is highly glutinous (thus, sticky) and is usually sold wrapped in banana leaves, which imparts flavor and keeps the small balls of rice from sticking together. Sticky rice is frequently sold unadorned, though it may also be stuffed with meat or vegetables and sprinkled with herbs and spices.

Another popular rice dish, often served as a breakfast food, is *johk*, a savory congee or rice porridge. The porridge may contain meat, perhaps some ginger, and even an egg.

### Chicken Butt

Wandering around Bangkok one afternoon, one can spot a vendor selling a number of grilled items, including small skewers of what seem clearly to be the triangular tail sections of a chicken. Each little piece of tail is a small package of unctuous fat, with a thin thread of meat inside. It may be brined before it is lightly caramelized on an outdoor grill over hardwood charcoal. With an added dollop of lime-laced hot

pepper sauce, it proves a brilliant combination of the four classic flavors that make Thai food distinctive: sweet, sour, salty, and hot.

## Fried Chicken

Perhaps because it requires a large quantity of hot oil (and consequently a number of safety precautions and perhaps extra steps), fried chicken is less common on Thai streets than grilled chicken, but the fried version is equally fabulous. In Thailand, fried chicken tends to have a lighter coating than American fried chicken, and this sheath is made of rice flour rather than wheat flour, so it clings more tightly to each chicken piece.

## Fresh Fruit

Thailand has a great abundance of fruit and vegetables, and although such produce is readily available, freshly cut fruits and vegetables take a backseat to more savory dishes at Thai street markets. Still, it is difficult to ignore the brightly colored stacks of incredible tropical food items, some of which are transported around the city on motor bikes. Fruits are sometimes sprinkled with salt and a little hot pepper powder to accentuate the sweetness. Some of the more common fruits include the easily recognizable water melon, papaya, and mango. If you prefer your street food cooked (and there's good reason why you might), consider fried bananas, creamy, sweet, and easy to eat while walking. At many fruit vendors, one can purchase a young green coconut, which is trimmed to fit in the hand and punctured to allow a straw to be inserted; the liquid of this fruit is only slightly sweet and is a good accompaniment for spicier foods.

## Thai Desserts

Though many Asian countries seem relatively unconcerned with sweet desserts, the Thais have taken desserts to a whole new level with hundreds of brightly colored creations in jelly, marzipan, and rice. Some of the more popular deserts include the following:



A street vendor selling chicken butt (tails) in Bangkok, Thailand. (Courtesy of David Hammond)



- Thai sticky rice with mango.
- *Khanoum*, a confection of rice flour, sugar, and coconut milk, may be served uncolored in relatively shapeless blobs or it may be brightly colored and cut into distinctive shapes (stars, flowers, etc.)
- Fried bananas, which may be eaten unadorned or with a chocolate or other sauce.

## Chiang Mai

Chiang Mai, the largest city in northern Thailand and a popular tourist destination, also has a bustling street-food scene. On Sundays, a famous night market is open on *Ratchadamnoen Road* from 4:00 P.M. to midnight. Every evening, vendors set up their carts at the southern gate of the old city selling such delicacies as *pad naam*, a local sweet-and-sour sausage with noodles; morning glory with vegetables or crispy pork; stewed pork shank; and *khao soi*, a creamy curry-based noodle dish made with chicken, beef, and sometimes pork, coconut milk, and sprinkled with deep-fried noodles. Lime and pickled cabbage add to the flavor. The quintessential Chiang Mai dessert is sticky rice with mango and condensed milk, which is also enjoyed for breakfast.

*David Hammond and Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Trinidad and Tobago

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The street food of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is one of the liveliest in the Caribbean and mirrors the ethnic diversity of the two islands. More than 40 percent of the one million Trinidadians and Tobagonians are of South Asian origin; another 40 percent are Afro-Trinidadian, while the remaining 20 percent are of Chinese, European, and Middle Eastern descent. Trinidadian cuisine combines elements of all these culinary traditions, although the food of the Indian subcontinent is the dominant influence, especially in the street-food sector. Trinidad has been called a “callaloo culture,” a reference to the popular stew that combines South Asian and African ingredients, including a local green, leafy vegetable by that name (also known as dasheen).

Originally inhabited by the Caribs and Arawaks and discovered by Christopher Columbus on his third voyage in 1498, Trinidad and Tobago was at various times controlled by the Spanish, the Dutch, the French, and finally the British. It gained its independence in 1962 and became a republic in 1976. When the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1833 created labor shortages in the Empire's sugar and coffee industries and plantations, the British government recruited Indians and some Chinese as indentured laborers for a fixed period. Between 1834 and 1917, nearly 1.5 million Indians emigrated to other parts of the British Empire, including 240,000 to British Guiana (now Guyana), 144,000 to Trinidad, and 36,000 to Jamaica. The majority came from Northeastern India with a smaller group from South India. Most elected to stay after their tenure was over and purchased land or set up small businesses. Some entrepreneurs set up small roadside stands selling versions of popular Indian street food.

Although Trinidad and Tobago is one of the richest countries in the Caribbean because of its oil and gas reserves, unemployment is high, leading many Trinidadians to enter the street-food sector. Most vendors are men. Street-food stalls and trucks are ubiquitous in residential neighborhoods and are especially popular next to schools, universities, and offices. Everyone eats street food, from laborers and students to company executives. The leading street-food areas include the town of St. James, just west of the capital Port of Spain, especially its Western Main Road that is open around the clock; the Savanna, a large park in the center of Port of Spain; Maracas Beach, an hour's drive south of the capital, famous for its *bake n' shark*; and Store Bay on the southeast coast of Tobago, known for its *curry crab*.

Street foods are popular for breakfast and lunch as well as in the late evening among people who spent a night on the town. They are also an essential part of Carnival, the local version of Mardi Gras. More recently, Trinidadian immigrants have taken their street food to North American cities, especially Toronto and New York.

Bread is a staple of Trinidadian street food and is similar to Indian breads, with some important differences. Whereas most Indian breads (*roti* in Hindi) are unleavened, in Trinidad and Tobago, bread is always leavened with baking powder and sometimes a little yeast and left a few hours to swell. Moreover, unlike most Indian breads that are made mainly from whole wheat flour, almost all Trinidadian breads are made from white flour. One explanation is that wheat was not grown in the immigrants' home regions, and the flour they first encountered would be the white flour used in Calcutta, the embarkation port for many. Popular varieties sold as street food are *sada roti* (plain bread), *paratha roti*, also called "buss-up-shut," *doubles*, and *dhalpuri*. *Roti* is also the name for what may be the most famous Trinidadian street food, a thick bread filled with meat, vegetable, or fish curry.

Curries are another Indian transplant. Trinidadian curries are often made with ready-made curry powders. Their chief ingredients—cumin, coriander, fenugreek, and turmeric—are very similar to those that would be used in a rural household in Northeastern India. For coriander leaves, people substitute a local herb called shado(w) beni (from the French Creole *cha(r)don béni*, called Vietnamese coriander in the United States) that grows wild. The chili pepper used in Trinidadian curries is the very fiery scotch bonnet (locally known as *congo pepper*).

Another popular category of street foods is crunchy sweet and savory snacks that came from India. Many are made from ground split peas or lentils, flour, curry powder, and other spices. The best known are *phulorie*, a small ball that is deep-fried and served right out of the pot; *saheena*, the same mixture rolled in a dasheen leaf, steamed, and then sliced and deep-fried; and *kachouri*, the same filling without the leaves. They are eaten freshly made and hot with some mango or tamarind chutney on the side. A popular sweet is *kurma*, strips of deep-fried dough soaked in sugar syrup and sold in little plastic bags by street vendors and in roadside shops.

The most common meats used in curries are goat and chicken, since Hindus traditionally avoid beef while Muslims as well as many Hindus shun pork. Today younger people are less likely to observe these restrictions.

Street-food vendors offer their patrons a range of accompaniments, including mango, cucumber, or tamarind chutneys that can be sweet or sour; *chokha* (tomato, eggplant, or even potato roasted over a fire, or under a grill, then mashed, seasoned with oil, chopped raw onion, and hot pepper); *mango kuchela*, a mango and mustard oil pickle made with ground spices roasted black; and “mother-in-law,” a hot vegetable relish. They also serve a variety of hot sauces made with red chilies that fall into three categories: slight, medium, and hot—which means mouth searing!

Vendors called “juice men” sell *fresh fruit*, such as mangoes, sour cherries, and tiny sweet or sweet-and-sour bananas; freshly squeezed fruit and coconut juice (coconut water) drunk straight from the shell; shelled and lightly roasted peanuts and cashew nuts (popular at cricket matches).

The small island of Tobago north of Trinidad is known for its *crab curry* and *raw oysters* that are served with a spicy tomato/vinegar sauce.

## Major Street Foods

### Bake

A popular and uniquely Trinidadian street food, especially for breakfast, is bake (a word used for both the singular and plural), although the dish is not

necessarily baked. Bake refers both to the bread itself and to a sandwich containing meat or, more commonly, fish that is cooked over an open flame, on a griddle or on a cooking stone on the stove top. It is served on or between slices of different varieties of bread: a flat heavy baked white bread (called a Johnny bake), fried bake (also called float) that is deep-fried to golden brown, and coconut bake, made with grated coconut. Bakes may be served with *buljol* (from the French *brûle-gueule*), shredded salt fish seasoned with tomatoes, onions, and sweet peppers; smoked herring; *chokha* (tomato, eggplant, or even potato roasted over a fire, or under a grill, then mashed, seasoned with oil, chopped raw onion, and hot pepper); or even standard breakfast items such as sausages and eggs.

The most famous bake is shark n' bake (sometimes called bake and shark), believed to have been invented at Maracas Bay, a popular beach around an hour's drive from Port of Spain. The beach is lined with a dozen shacks serving shark n' bake, which consists of deep-fried, battered, and seasoned young shark meat stuffed into a fried unleavened bread. It's eaten with plenty of hot sauce and often washed down with cold beer.

## Doubles

A street food that ties with *rotis* for the honor of being Trinidad's national dish is "doubles," sometimes called "channa (chickpea) hamburger." This is a sandwich made by filling two pieces of fried bread, or *bara*, with curried chickpeas and topped with chutneys made from tamarind or cucumber and with chili sauce of varying degrees of hotness. Its invention is often attributed to Mohammed Deen, who in the mid-1930s started selling fried chickpeas in a paper cone and later in a piece of bread. His customers would ask him to "double up" on the bread, which led to the name. Doubles are eaten for breakfast and lunch and sometimes as a late-night snack. The "doubles man" selling doubles from his bike is a popular figure in many neighborhoods. Famous street-side vendors include Deen's Doubles in San Juan, Ali's Doubles in San Fernando, Sauce Doubles in Curepe, and Johnny's Doubles in La Romaine and Golconda.

## Roti

Roti is the ultimate street and take-out food, sold by vendors and small shops, especially in the St. James district of Port of Spain. In Trinidad, the word *roti* (from the Hindi word for bread) denotes both bread in general and a specific dish that shares with doubles the reputation as the country's national dish. It consists of a large, thick, round, and slightly fried bread coated with ground yellow peas and wrapped around a goat, chicken, seafood, or vegetable curry. It is enclosed in wax paper or foil and eaten on the run. Popular condiments include mango, cucumber,

or tamarind chutneys; *chokha*, mango kuchela, a mango and mustard oil pickle; and “mother-in-law,” a hot vegetable relish.

Varieties of roti include *paratha roti*, also called buss-up-shut, supposedly because it looks like a “busted-up shirt.” The starting point is a plain (*sada*) roti made from white wheat flour, salt, water, a little leavening, and sometimes butter or oil that is rolled into a flat circle and cooked in oil until it has a crispy exterior. When it is almost finished cooking, the cook wraps it in a kitchen towel and beats it with a wooden paddle or his hands until it opens and crumbles into pieces. It’s eaten with curry and various side dishes and is a popular lunch meal.

Another variety is *dhalpuri* or *dhalpuri roti* made by filling a round of white flour dough with mashed boiled yellow split peas flavored with roasted cumin powder, garlic, and pepper. After cooking on a lightly greased flat pan, it is folded into four and served with curry and mango chutney. It is the subject of a film by Richard Fung called *Dhal Puri Roti*, which traces its journey from Bihar, India, to Trinidad. A novelist gives the following description of the *dhalpuri* experience:

We parked the bike and walked through the market. We got two Carib beers and strode around drinking straight from the bottles. Then Fyzie headed for a dhalpuri stall and before I knew what he was doing, he bought two dhalpuris and handed me one. I bit into the paper thin roti, bursting with split pea stuffing, and lapped up the spicy, juicy curry shrimps wrapped inside it, and shrugged off obsessive thoughts of eating light that belonged in another world of idleness. (Peggy Mohan, *Jahajin*).

## Other Street Foods

### **Aloo (Potato) Pie**

This is a soft fried piece of dough made from flour and water, filled with boiled, spiced mashed potatoes and other vegetables such as green peas or channa dal. It is sometimes compared with an Indian *samosa* but is much larger and more closely resembles a calzone. It is served with a tamarind chutney. Aloo pies are often sold by doubles vendors and are popular among students.

### **Corn Soup**

This popular Trinidadian street food reflects Indian, Chinese, and African influences. Medallions of corn several inches thick are simmered in a giant pot with dumplings and assorted vegetables, especially roots or tubers to thicken the mixture and seasoned with garlic, shadow benny, and onions. It is served in Styrofoam cups

and is a favorite of people after a night on the town. Boiled corn (called boil corn) and roast corn are other popular street-food snacks.

### Curry Crab

This is the quintessential street food of the small island of Tobago and is especially associated with Store Bay on the little island's southeast coast. Locally caught crabs are cooked with cumin seeds, shadow beni, and curry powder and served with a large boiled flour oblong-shaped dumpling, which may be of African origin. The dish is sold in legendary stalls with names like Miss Jean and Miss Esme. Patrons eat them in benches or a covered pavilion.

### Oysters

Oysters are a popular street food in Trinidad and Tobago, especially among men who believe them to have aphrodisiac properties. In Trinidad, the species *Crassostrea rhizophorae* are harvested from the Claxton Bay Mangrove System as well as from the west coast. They are typically served raw in a small glass or Styrofoam cup in a mixture of lime juice and a spicy tomato sauce, a dish called "oyster cocktail." Oyster vendors have distinctive setups: a table, often blue in color, with a few scattered shells, glass bottles for sauces of different degrees of hotness, and a torch made from a bottle, twisted paper, and fuel.

### Phoulorie

This is a small golden ball made of ground split peas, curry, and turmeric (which Trinidadians sometimes call "saffron") that is deep-fried and best eaten freshly made. It is served with condiments, including mango or tamarind chutney. Phoulories are sold everywhere and at any time: on the street, at football matches, and at festivals. They are usually served in little paper bags with an accompanying spicy sauce in a plastic bag.

*Colleen Taylor Sen*

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## Turkey

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The street food of Turkey reflects its diverse culture and historical background as well as its unique geographical location. Turkey connects Southeastern Europe

with Asia and the Middle East. The Black Sea lies to the north of the country, the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas are on the west, while the south borders the Anatolian peninsula. The European part of Turkey is called Thrace, and the Asian part Anatolia (Asia Minor). The capital of Turkey is Ankara, but the largest city is Istanbul, previously capital of the Byzantine and Ottoman empires. The country, founded in 1923, has nine neighbors: Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iran to the east; Iraq and Syria to the southeast; the island of Cyprus to the south; and Greece and Bulgaria to the west and northwest. The cuisines of all those neighboring countries have much in common with Turkish cuisine, and this is reflected in street food.

The Turks were a seminomadic people of Central Asia who made their way to Anatolia in the 11th century and continued to move westward, establishing the Seljuk and later Ottoman empires. They settled in parts of the Balkan Peninsula and pushed their way deep into Europe, reaching as far as the outskirts of Vienna in the 16th century. Today's Turkish citizens are descendants of not only Turkic-speaking tribes but also an enormous ethnic mix that lived in former Ottoman territory. The Ottoman Empire also extended southward to the Middle East and Africa, and consequently, today's Turkish food culture has a very varied and complex historical legacy, enhanced by a diverse geography. Central Asian, Iranian, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and Balkan traditions echo in food and eating habits in the streets.

Istanbul and many Anatolian cities always had lively marketplaces and bazaars, which fostered the existence of varied street-food suppliers. Turkey also has a deep-rooted tradition of public kitchens called *imaret* established as institutions

### The World's First Street-Food Standards

Turkey may have been the first country to have a written set of standards regulating food sold in the streets and at small eateries. The Bursa Edict of Standards, issued by Sultan Bayezid II in 1502, is regarded as the world's first standard in the modern sense. This 500-year-old document covers products sold in Bursa (a city in northwestern Turkey), ranging from foodstuffs to market vendors' aprons, specifying everything from weights to origins of produce. It includes detailed listings

of food prices and qualifications for bakers, butchers, chicken and egg sellers, fish mongers, grocers, staple suppliers, *helva*, and sweet makers. The edict also sets standards for cooked food served in eateries, giving ratios of the ingredients in blanchmange, the meat content of fritters, the choice of meat in meals of prime cuts or pot stew with bones, kebabs on skewers, and listing fried meat dish prices, even mentioning details like the onions to be served as a side dish.



A street vendor selling simit (ring-shaped bread) and other dishes in Antalya, Turkey. (Jspring/Dreamstime.com)

of charity. During the Ottoman times, imarets became an indispensable part of the urban landscape, offering free food for the needy. The recent phenomenon of setting up charity tents during the fasting month of Ramadan that distribute free full course meals to all to break the fast stems from this tradition.

Urban life, especially in bigger cities, inevitably develops a culture of street foods. Street food is readily available in every central shopping zone, squares, marketplaces, parks, strolling promenades, in front of schools, and so forth. Street food is quick and cheap but is not confined to the poor; on the contrary, it embraces all strata of the society and melts away class distinctions. As anywhere in the world, buyers of street food are people on the go, in a hurry, or on a tight budget.

Street food places in Turkey can be classified into two categories: mobile and fixed. Movable street-food vendors can be pedestrians carrying food in trays or boxes or displaying them in pushcarts or glass cases. The pushcarts are sometimes converted into a man-operated vehicle with the help of a makeshift bicycle mechanism. Many street vendors operate like a movable little kiosk, stationing whenever and wherever there is an opportunity for good business. Sometimes a favorable spot becomes like a spontaneous marketplace with many vendors crowding into the same area. Fresh corn, roasted chestnuts, meatballs or little skewers of meat, pickles, ice cream, sweet wafer disks and candy, roasted nuts, and so forth, all are among such movable treats.

There might be favorite spots or even hours for some vendors, depending on the popularity of their food and their targeted customer. Everybody knows when and where to find a favorite snack. Late-night steam carts laden with buttery rice



pilaf with chickpeas or mobile meatball grills are features of night life, while early morning birds can find *simit* vendors (sesame-sprinkled bread-rings) hawking in the street. Summer nights are enlivened with ice-cream vendors, sweet fritter (*lokma*) makers, pickle and pickle juice carts, and the quintessential assorted nut sellers.

Nibbling open sunflower, melon, or pumpkin seeds and spitting out the shells is a favorite Turkish pastime. Another summer favorite is corn on the cob, either boiled or grilled and simply sprinkled with salt. There are also sweet vendors with mobile street carts selling sticky semolina pudding *Şam tatlısı* or big rings of fluted fried batter drenched in syrup. Amusement parks are never without pink clouds of cotton candy, bright red candy-covered apples, or wafer disks called *kağıt helva*, literally paper halwa. Nougat-like sesame crackers and handmade lollipops are all sold by *helvacı*, the sweets man in mobile glass-sided pushcarts. One disappearing treat is *macun*, sugar paste, with an assorted selection of various flavorings tinted in bright colors, whirled around a stick.

For those who do not have the time to sit down for a full meal, a ubiquitous feature of modern Turkish cities is the *büfe*, or sandwich bar, which offers toasted sandwiches with cheese or *sucuk*, the spicy cured meat sausage. Cities have local specialties, such as the famous toast of Ayvalık, a seaside town on the Aegean coast. Some famous kiosks have signature dishes, such as the “wet hamburger,” made by keeping the cooked meat patty in a spicy sauce, keeping the bun moist in a steam chamber, and eventually soaking the bun in the sauce. The *büfe* also serves as a juice bar offering freshly squeezed orange, grapefruit, pomegranate, carrot, and apple juices. *Bufes* always supply *ayran*, a diluted salted yogurt drink and *limonata* (lemonade).

Fresh fruit and vegetable vendors are usually markers of seasonal transitions. There is always an abundant variety of fruits sold by wandering sellers throughout the country, but only a few are sold as street snacks. Whole watermelons and other melons are sold in the streets but almost never in slices as a snack. Certain fruits make their first appearance of the season on street carts, as if to announce the coming of spring. *Çağla*, green unripe almonds, and *can eriği*, unripe green plums, are the first to appear. They are sold in little paper bags or cones with a tiny paper wrap of salt to dip into. In late spring and early summer, trays of fresh white mulberries and carts of apricots, cherries, and loquats enliven the streets. Unripe green chickpeas sold in bundles like brooms are the favorite of children. Cool cucumbers, peeled and salted on the spot, or juicy prickly pears, carefully stripped of their spines, are refreshers of hot summer days, the latter especially in southern cities. Toward the end of summer, fresh green or purple figs and shelled and peeled fresh walnuts appear. Fresh hazelnuts in shells are also among the end of summer treats. Fall is the time of wild gathered fruits; red and yellow azeroles (*alıç*) are

stringed like necklaces; oleaster fruit (*iğde*), jujubes (*hiñnap*), or tree strawberries (*kocayemiş*) are sold in paper cones. The quince vendor is a herald of winter.

Many eateries are formed around bazaars, another typical feature of Ottoman cities. Many shopping and business areas have little eateries called *esnaf lokantası* that mainly cater to shop owners, shoppers, and office workers, and often serve only lunch. The foods are mostly choices of soups, and a wide range of hot *tencere yemeği* (pot stews, vegetable and meat dishes) laid out warm for the customers to choose from. They also feature legume/vegetable and meat stews, eggplant dishes, stuffed vegetables with minced meat, chicken stew, or a slow-cooked meat dish, and rice pilaf. Simple desserts like fruit compotes, milk puddings, bread puddings, or quince and pumpkin desserts are available in these eateries.

Specialized eateries that offer one kind of food only are numerous. Foremost are places offering grilled meat dishes. A *köfteci* is a place to have meatballs, often accompanied by assorted pickles and *piyaz*, a bean and onion salad. *Ciğerci* specializes in liver skewers, while *ciğer tava* sells only thin slices of crispy fried liver. Wandering vendors sell cold fried liver cubes to be tucked into bread with onion slices. *Dönerci* sells the ubiquitous *döner*: meat slices roasted on a big vertical spit and shaved into slivers. Other grilled meat places sell *kanatçı* (chicken wings), *çöp-şiş* (tiny meat skewers), *tantuni* (meat stir fry), and *kokoreç* (grilled intestines). Many of these grilled meats are served in bread or wrapped in flatbread, to form a *dürüm*, literally meaning a wrap.

Seaside choices include *balık-ekmek*, grilled fish in bread. The *pideci* serves *pide*, a thin, oblong flatbread topped with cheese, meat, spinach, or eggs, or a mixture. They usually also offer *lahmacun*, a flatbread with a minced meat topping. The *börekçi* has a variety of *börek* (layered savory pastries), often served chopped up on small plates to be eaten quickly on the spot. The beaneries serve only *kuru fasulye*, or bean casserole, served with buttery rice pilaf. *Mantıci* serves only *mantı*, tiny Turkish dumplings filled with minced meat and served with yogurt sauce. The *işkembeci* sells *işkembe çorbası*, tripe soup, and is usually open overnight, as tripe soup is considered to be an ideal hangover remedy. The *çorbacı* is a soup (*çorba*) restaurant, which again remains open until late at night from early hours in the morning.

Sweets are usually eaten in separate shops. The *muhallebici* specializes in *muhallebi*, milk pudding. Sweets soaked in syrup are also sold in specialist sweet shops, the favorite being *baklava*, a multilayered pastry filled with pistachios, walnuts, or cream. Others include *tel kadayıf* (pastry threads stuffed with nuts), *ekmek kadayıf* (rusks topped with clotted cream), *künefe* (pastry threads stuffed with cheese and served hot), *tulumba tatlısı* (fritters made of batter squeezed from a syringe), *lokma* (ball-shaped fritters), *revani* (cake made with semolina), and *şekerpare* (syrupy cookies).

Though prohibited by Islam, alcoholic drinks are widely enjoyed, especially in large cities and coastal regions. Drinking is considered a social occasion enjoyed at a table for long hours, and the most common location is a *meyhane*, typically offering a selection of small platters of *meze* to accompany the national drink, the anise-flavored spirit *raki*. Street vendors are usually allowed to enter *meyhanes* or to wander between tables on the street to add a few specialties to the table. The usual ones include *çiğ köfte*, spicy raw meatballs; *midye dolma*, rice, pine nut, and raisin-stuffed mussels; *buzlu badem*, fresh almonds on a bed of ice. Another popular evening pastime is sipping beer at a stall, munching *midye tava*, batter fried mussels on a skewers with a garlicky dip.

Apart from all those traditional street foods, international fast-food chains and coffeehouses are common in many towns and cities. The Turkish response to this has been the recent phenomenon called *simit sarayı*, sesame ring palaces, offering varied ways to consume the *simit*, the sesame ring bread. Another recent development in the fast-food scene has been the phenomenon of *kumpir*, jacket potato, served with a wide choice of toppings.

Beverages constitute part of the street food. Places to pass the time between meals are mainly the *kahve*, the coffeehouse, where men traditionally congregate, or the more family-friendly *çay bahçesi*, or tea garden. *Çay*, black tea served in tulip-shaped glasses, is readily available everywhere, as there is a tea kiosk in every shopping area, neighborhood, or office block delivering tea to all. In every town, patisseries also serve tea and beverages along with their assorted sweet-and-savory baked goods. Nowadays, bakeries have started to serve their baked goods at small tables along with a glass of tea or home-made lemonade.

People's daily diet is based on home-cooked meals, but still street food plays a vital role in the routine of the urban population. Street food, however, is not usually junk food, but food freshly prepared from scratch, often quite healthy, usually not fried and free of additives and preservatives. Some street food constitutes a substantial part of urban food supply, while many others are only for fun.

Street-food vendors, in particular the wandering ones, are almost always male, with the exception of *gözleme* makers (flat pies cooked on a griddle) who are always female, since the skills required for making the flat dough with various fillings seem to be confined to women. Small joints serving *mantı*, Turkish stuffed dumplings, are usually run by women, or at least the cook back in the kitchen is always a woman, and the same applies to the preparation of *sarma* and *dolma*, wrapped and stuffed food. Women are involved in the cooking process of much home-made ready food sold in street carts, like rice pilaf with chickpeas or fried liver cubes eaten cold. These are often family businesses, with the wife doing the home cooking and the husband doing the street selling. *Simit* vendors' ages can range from school-age kids helping the family to make ends meet to old men still struggling to earn a living.

## Major Street Foods

### *Simit*

*Simit* is a sesame-sprinkled savory bread ring sold by vendors called *simitçi*. If there is one street food that can be considered as the national street food of Turkey, it would be *simit*. It is often stacked on a tray balanced on the vendor's head cushioned with a cloth ring, the same tray serving as a makeshift stall supported on a folding leg wherever the vendor finds a good selling spot. In glass pushcarts, a few other types of baked goods are sold along with *simit*, like *açma*, a ring-shaped buttery bun or *poğaç*, a flaky savory plain or cheese-filled pastry. To make *simit*, the dough is shaped into thin rings, dipped in a grape molasses and water mix, coated with sesame seeds, and baked. In some regions, *simit* is called *gevrek*, meaning crisp. Strangely, it is both crispy and chewy: crispy on the crust, chewy in the inside. It is usually consumed as is, sometimes paired with Turkish kasar cheese. A Turkish response to international fast-food chains has been the recent phenomenon called *simit sarayı*, literally meaning *simit palace*, a local chain in a bakery-café format.

### *Köfte*

*Köfte* are meatballs, and they are sold by *köfteci*, which refers to the vendor or the shop that makes and sells grilled meatballs. If *köfte* are made on a street cart or kiosk, they are usually placed in a half or quarter loaf of white bread, with chopped onions, tomatoes, and a few slices of pickles or fresh green chilies. Nearly every town has its own specialty meatballs; the taste, texture, and consistency vary slightly. If the meatballs are made and sold in a small eatery, they are often accompanied by assorted pickles and *piyaz*, a bean and onion salad. Traditional pairing beverage is *ayran*, a diluted salty yoghurt drink.

### *Döner Kebap*

*Döner Kebap* is a Turkish street food that has gained a worldwide reputation. It is popular in many countries under different names, *gyros* in Greece and *shawarma* throughout the Middle East (a word derived from Turkish *çevirme*, meaning rotating). The meat of choice was traditionally lamb, but nowadays it is a mixture of lamb and veal. The newly invented chicken variety is becoming popular. The essential secret is its rotating cooking technique. Slices of seasoned meat are stacked up like a huge inverted cone on a vertical spit, slowly sizzling against a vertically built grill. The rate of roasting is adjusted by turning the spit, and the sizzling crisp cooked part of the stack is shaved off by a huge knife that slices the best bits vertically down to the tray beneath the spit. The sliced shavings mixed with the

drippings are either served on a bed of rice pilaf, *pilavüstü*, or wrapped in flatbread lavaş to make a wrap, *dürüm*; or put in a split loaf of bread, *ekmekarası*. The famous *İskender kebab*, available only in an establishment specializing in this dish, is served on a bed of sliced flatbread and doused liberally with tomato sauce and melted butter.

### ***Pide***

The *pideci* serves *pide*, a thin, oblong flatbread topped with cheese, meat, spinach, eggs, or a mixture of these. Meat topping choices are minced meat mixed with chopped tomatoes and peppers; *sucuk*, spicy cured sausage; *pastırma*, spicy cured dried beef; *kavurma*, potted preserved meat chunks; and *kuşbaşı*, lamb meat chopped into little pieces. Almost every town in Turkey has its signature *pide* varieties, served piping hot from the wood-fired stone oven, consumed on the spot, or ordered as a takeout to houses or offices. A common practice is to prepare the topping at home and send it into the *pide* baker to be cooked and delivered back.

### ***Börek***

*Börek* is the generic name for a flaky, layered pastry filled with meat, cheese, potatoes, or spinach, and the *börekçi* is the maker and vendor of a variety of savory pastries; spiraled, coiled, layered, folded, wrapped, and so forth. It can be a hand-pushed cart or a small bakery-like shop, both offering takeaway or serve on the spot. *Su böreği*, literally meaning “water börek,” is the stretched out dough that is first boiled in water, then layered with butter and baked. Samosa-like huge folded thin dough filled with juicy raw meat filling is called *çiğ börek* and is always fried upon demand.

## **Other Street Foods**

### ***Gözleme***

*Gözleme* is thinly hand-rolled pastry filled with a variety of fillings, folded and cooked on a *sac*, a convex metal plate on fire, like an inverted wok. The filling can be cheese with fresh herbs, minced meat with onions, spicy mashed potatoes, cooked spinach, or wild greens. It is a vivid heritage from the nomadic past of Turks, still enjoyed in every city, and always accompanied by a cool glass of *ayran* or warm tea served in tulip-shaped glasses.

### ***Manti***

*Manti* is a dish of tiny pasta dumplings with seasoned minced meat and onion filling, boiled and topped with garlicky yogurt and drizzled with red

pepper-infused melted butter. Sumac and dried mint are usually sprinkled on it for extra flavor.

### Ice cream

Traditional Turkish ice cream, *dondurma*, meaning frozen, does not contain any eggs or cream; it is made with sweetened milk thickened with *salep*, dried, powdered wild purple orchid root. As *salep* is very expensive and orchids are in danger of extinction, their current use is limited and other thickening agents like carob seeds are used. Sometimes flavored with *sakız*, mastic resin from a wild pistachio tree, milk ice cream has a chewy, stringy consistency. Fruit ices are traditionally not made with milk, but are like sorbets, the most popular flavors being *vişne*, sour cherry and lemon, melon, black mulberry, peach, strawberry, and apricot.

### Muhallebi

*Muhallebi* is a milk pudding; the *muhallebici* specializes in all sorts of milk puddings and some sweets. They also sell chicken soup and rice pilaf with chicken as a by-product of the signature pudding of the place, *tavuk göğsü*, a milk pudding made of pounded cooked chicken breast, rice flour, milk, and sugar. The caramelized version called *kazandibi* is pan-roasted to obtain a caramelized bottom, cut into squares, and rolled up.

### Boza and Salep

These are drinks only available on cold winter days. *Boza* is a thick fermented drink, loved by locals but an acquired taste for foreigners. Winter nights are pierced with the cries of *boza* sellers, who roam the streets carrying large jug of a thick, almost pudding-like drink made from fermented millet. Pale yellow with a slightly sweet and tangy sour flavor, it is served in a glass with a spoon. *Salep* is frothy sweet milk thickened with the dried and powdered wild orchid root. It is good for the chest and warms you to the bones. Both are served with a sprinkle of cinnamon.

Aylin Öney Tan

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## Ukraine

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Ukraine, Europe's largest country in area, is located in the eastern part of that continent. Ukraine is bordered by seven other countries, the most important of which is Russia to the north and east. The country has coastlines to its south on the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. Major rivers run through it, the Dnieper and Dniester being the most important, both economically and historically. Ukraine has some varied landforms, but by far the most important are the vast fertile plains that are among the world's greatest wheat producers. Temperate climate with cold winters and warm summers allows for good agriculture, while the southern coast has a warmer Mediterranean climate that permits wine production and tourism.

Although most Ukrainians consider themselves as belonging to the same ethnic group, various people have passed through what has been called the crossroads of Eastern Europe, and some have remained. Ukraine is significant in Russian history because the first Russian state began in Kiev in the ninth century. Norse warriors and merchants who sailed up and down the Dnieper River were called "Ruotsi," thus giving their name to the future country to the north. The Kievan state later fell to Mongols in the 12th century and after that was ruled by Lithuanian and Polish monarchies. Through most of the 20th century, the country was in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, but with the collapse of that political body in 1991, Ukraine became an independent country. Today, there is a significant Russian minority, most of who live in the eastern parts of the country and urban areas such as Kiev and Odessa on the Black Sea. A smaller population of Tatars—remnants of the old Mongol Empire—now lives in the Crimean Peninsula. Although the Ukrainian language is close to Russian, it has many dialects within it and loanwords from Polish and Russian. Naturally, all the people who have been in and through Ukraine have left their marks on the country's cuisine.

Important as outside influences have been in Ukrainian food, there are two anchors to which it is moored: religion and bread with potatoes. Most Ukrainians belong to a branch of the Eastern Orthodox churches. Like Greek, Russian, and many others of similar faith, Ukrainians have elaborate festivals at the major holidays, Easter and Christmas being the most important. Many characteristic dishes made at home appear for sale in public, around churches and squares, so no street-food scene is complete without this holiday fare.



As for bread and potatoes, these are the foundation of life in the Ukraine. Wheat has been grown in the Ukraine for almost 7,000 years, and today many kinds of breads and wheat-based pastries are made and sold. Traditionally, when someone enters a Ukrainian home, they are offered a *rushnyc*, a small round white bread and salt, to be eaten on the spot. White breads, rolls, rye breads (made with wheat and rye mixture), brown breads, and rolls, some with herbs, in many shapes are readily available from shops and small restaurants. The greatest bread glory comes on the holidays when special fancy versions are made. *Kalach* is made from three long strands of dough, representing the Holy Trinity, braided together and baked. *Paska* is a round sweet bread, often with shapes made of dough on it in the forms of crosses, flowers, or eggs. *Babkai* is a tall cylindrical sweet bread often baked with raisins and dried fruits that is another Easter specialty.

## Major Street Foods

### Dumplings

Wheat dough is used as wrappers for Ukraine's most popular street food, dumplings. These are commonly sold in such public places as train stations, squares, and parks, often by older women called *babtia* (grandmothers). The kerchiefs that they often wear on their heads are called *babushkas* in Russian, a term commonly used throughout Eastern Europe for women street vendors. *Perohy*, *varenyky*, and *pyrizhky* are all forms of savory pastries that are boiled or fried before serving. They can be filled with mashed potatoes, onions, ground meats, chopped cabbage, and mushrooms, and are often served with sour cream and dill. Mushrooms are very important in Ukrainian cuisine and used in a great many dishes.

### Holubtsi

*Holubtsi* are cabbage rolls—boiled cabbage leaves filled with rice or rice and chopped meat, then rolled up and steamed or cooked in a thin tomato sauce, and served with sour cream. *Holubtsi* and dumplings are always found at Eastertime, sold by women of each church, and eaten before and after services.

### Perepichka

One really popular specialty is called *perepichka*. A specialty of Kiev that is now found across the country, this is a sausage wrapped in the kind of dough used in *varenyki* and then deep-fried.

Central Asia and the Crimea where Turkic-speaking Tatars live have influenced Ukrainian street food. One of their dishes is *Shashlik*, skewers of beef or lamb often threaded with onions, tomatoes, and sweet peppers that are cooked on open grills,

preferably charcoal-fired, on streets across the country. They are served either plain or with chewy white bread or rolls. Because the meat is already marinated with paprika as an ingredient, sauces are not usually served with the *shashlik*. But if the vendor prepares the dish in the popular Georgian style, then a plum sauce is sure to accompany it.

## Other Street Foods

### Potatoes

Though potatoes came into wide use only in the 18th and 19th centuries, they are served with almost every meal at home. Several fast-food chains and local restaurants in Kiev and other cities serve baked potatoes that are mashed and topped with fried mushrooms, herring, sour cream, cottage cheese, shredded vegetables, and more. Urban fast-food restaurants modeled on western hamburger chains always have French fries and other forms of potatoes.

### *Chebureki*

Half-moon-shaped *chebureki*, Central Asian versions of dumplings filled with lamb, mushrooms, and other ingredients, are deep-fried and sold on the streets of Kiev, Odessa, and other cities.

### Beverages

Popular drinks include international soft drinks and local versions. Two specialties are not much found outside of Eastern Europe: *kvass* and *uzvar*. *Kvass* is a mildly alcoholic drink made from dried rye bread, yeast, and water, which is allowed to ferment overnight. *Uzvar* is made from dried fruits such as apples and plums that are steeped in water with sugar. Both are very popular and almost always sold at festivals and fairs.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## United States and African American

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The United States is a highly varied land. Its geography ranges from low-lying eastern and southern coasts, mountain chains in its eastern (the Appalachians and

Adirondacks) and western (the Rockies and Cascades) regions, huge fertile river valleys (the Mississippi and its many tributaries), vast deserts (the Southwest), immense plains (the Midwest), and the world's greatest inland seas (the Great Lakes). Climates range from tropical and subtropical in the south to cool and temperate in the north. United States' food comes from these lands, and local street foods, to some extent, still reflect their geographical origins.

Even more important to United States' street food is the history of the country's people. The United States is one of the world's greatest immigrant countries. Naturally, the people who came brought their own food preferences with them and adapted what they found in their new country. Native Americans themselves were immigrants, most of who came during the last Ice Age, as long ago as 20,000 years. Over time, the Native Americans came to raise corn, beans, and squash, hunted wild game, and gathered many wild plants for food. Though some had complex societies with settlements large enough to be called cities and states, they seem not to have had street food, as far as we know. But at gatherings where different peoples met, food was shared. The first Thanksgiving at Plymouth Plantation in 1621 was one of them. Stews, made of meats, or especially seasonal vegetables, would have been common. One of these, a mixture of corn and beans called "succotash" (*msíckquatash* in its original Narragansett form), passed down to later European settlers and is still served at community festivals around the country.

Starting about 1500 CE, peoples from Europe, Africa, and Asia poured into the continent later known as North America. Spaniards settled in Florida and the Southwest, while France sent people to modern Canada, the Great Lakes, and the whole Mississippi Valley. Most important of all were British immigrants, Africans (most of whom came unwillingly), and, beginning in the 19th century to the present, Irish, Germans, Europeans, and people from Latin America. Today, descendants of these groups number in the millions: about 50 million people of German descent, 17 million with Italian roots, and 10 million of Polish origin. Mexican Americans constitute a large percentage of the American population, numbering at least 38 million. All these groups contributed a great many items to North American street food, and some are more regional than others, especially in the Southwest where Mexican influences are strong.

Immigrants brought most of the basic ingredients of United States' street food. Pigs, cattle (including dairy products made from cows' milk), chickens, sheep and goats, wheat, barley, rye, and many others are imports from the Old World. Native American corn, however, is one of the most important ingredients of most American food. From animal feed, to corn oil, cornmeal, corn starch, corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, and even popcorn and its variants, such as caramel corn, this grain (it is not a vegetable) is found everywhere. As one expert on food production puts it, even chicken nuggets are mostly corn with a little animal protein in them.

The reason for corn's universality is that it is so useful in United States' industrialized food system. Centralized food processors, such as meat and poultry producers, milling companies, and confectioners make many of the products sold by vendors of all kinds. Few American food sellers make their own sausages, raise their own beef cattle, keep poultry for eggs, grow sugarcane or sugar beets, or make their own chocolate. Certainly, the food sold in vending machines all comes from factories. Nevertheless, most street food is prepared on the spot by sellers from as fresh ingredients as they can get. A taco from a vendor (as opposed to a large fast-food outlet) loaded with freshly cooked meats and vegetables and coated with home-made sauces is as close to home-made and locally sourced food as one can find.

American street food is most popular in its cities, at fairs, and places of amusement and vacations, such as beachside boardwalks. It is stronger in ethnic communities, especially more recent immigrants such as those from Latin America and Southeast Asia. Most street vendors who operate carts tend to be new immigrants—in New York, roughly 70 percent are from South Asia—or people who are at the lower levels of the economic scale. Street food has always been an entryway into higher economic strata. Street vendors' organizations have sprung up in a number of cities, allied with social justice groups, asking for licenses to be granted and better treatment by local authorities. Other kinds of vendors such as operators of food booths or wagons at fairs tend to be part-time, seasonal sellers who have other jobs in the food industry or do it as a family enterprise. Food trucks have become popular in the early decades of the 21st century, and many are run by chefs who see them as good ways to make a living and to give themselves visibility, since the best trucks are highly publicized in the local and national media. Today, about 28 percent of Americans have seen or patronized food trucks.

Legal street-food venues (some, called "gypsy," are not), such as carts and trucks, are regulated by local governments. Vendors must obtain licenses and are regularly inspected by health authorities to ensure food safety. Overwhelmingly, street food in North America is safe from food-borne diseases, though much of it is not exactly nutritionally healthy fare. Americans consume street food during the whole day. Early morning coffee trucks are very popular in cities, while lunchtime is the busiest time for vendors. Since Americans like to snack, street food is eaten all through the day, depending on the food. Television programs and movies shot in New York, for instance, often show characters snacking on food from the many stands that dot the city's streets. Some trucks serve what amounts to dinner entrees, so people can pick up evening meals on the street. Though large quantities of street foods are eaten, unlike a number of African countries, it is not the main source of calories in the American diet.

The most popular street foods are those that are served in a wrapper made of wheat or corn flour. The wrapper may be made of leavened bread, usually white bread in the form of buns, or flatbreads, such as pita (which may be raised) or tortillas. Sandwiches, including hot dogs, hamburgers, submarines (or hoagies),

meatball sandwiches, cheese, and many others have been staples of American street and fast food since the 19th century. Tacos and wraps (food wrapped in flatbread) and sweet crepes are also common on the streets on stands, in trucks, and at fairs. Some prewrapped tacos or burritos are also available in vending machines. Stuffed dishes that can be reheated at a stand or cart are also popular. Small meat or vegetable turnovers such as empanadas, tamales, and knishes are among the best known, though some are regional specialties, such as Cornish pasties in the Upper Midwest and runzas in Nebraska. The rising popularity of Asian foods has brought dumplings and egg rolls of many kinds to trucks and a few carts.

Baked goods are common in street-food venues. Cinnamon buns, bagels, croissants, muffins, and scones often appear on carts and trucks that serve morning coffee and tea. Cupcake trucks, following the fad for these small cakes, can now be found in a number of cities. Waffles, and to a lesser extent pancakes, are almost always found in stands at fairs and in some street trucks. Savory baked pies, pizza mainly, are also mainstays, especially of the truck business.

Fried foods, from savory to sweet, are staples of fairs and some street-food vendors—deep frying is difficult to do on street carts, but often found in trucks. Fried potatoes and other vegetables, corn dogs, fried cheese curds, fried chicken, chicken wings, bacon, and tortilla chips (for nachos) are among many savories. Fried doughs such as funnel cakes, doughnuts, elephant ears, bunuelos, and churros are ubiquitous at fairs and in many stands. In recent years, fried food on sticks have become features of public dining, including fried candy bars, fried ice cream, bananas, and even beer and lemonade. None of these can be considered a healthy part of a diet; instead, they are snacks eaten for pleasure.

Sweets have always been elements of the street-food scene. Ice creams and other frozen products have been on the scene since the 19th century. Confections such as sweetened popcorn—today's caramel corn, saltwater taffy, fudge, toffee, cotton candy, and a host of commercially manufactured candies—have long been popular as public foods. Sweet beverages are found on almost every food cart, truck, and fair stand in the United States. Except for coffee, most sweetened drinks include sodas/pops, lemonade, sweet tea (mainly in the South), and fruit drinks. They are served usually with food, but often alone as refreshments for customers who are on the move.

## Major Street Foods

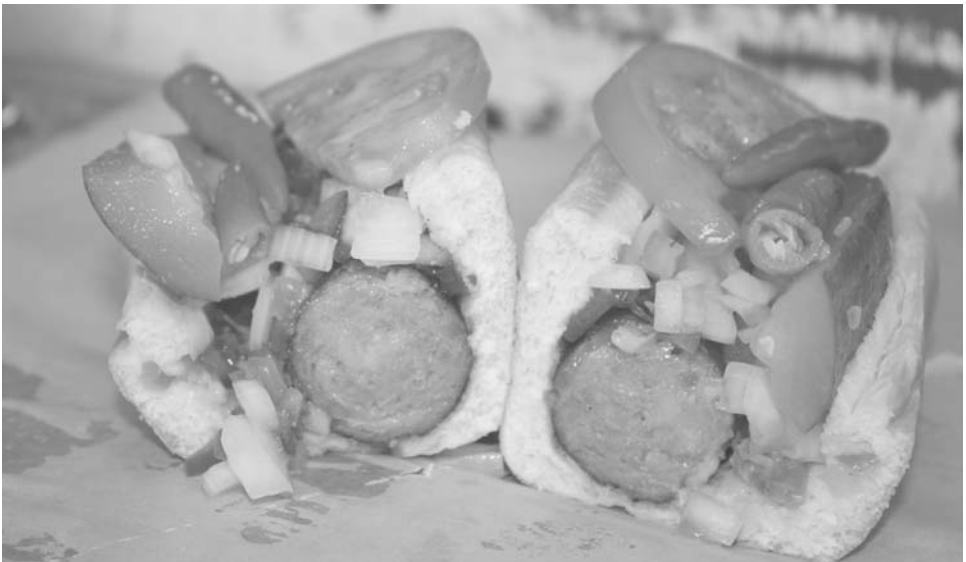
### Sandwiches

Far and away, the most widely consumed types of food are those wrapped in bread. Sandwiches are made with wheat-flour breads. The earliest kinds were simply slices

of bread filled with sliced meats or cheese and sometimes peanut butter when it became popular around 1900. The famous ham and cheese, BLT (bacon–lettuce–and tomato), tuna or chicken salad, and melted cheese are examples. They were served by lunch wagons who serviced factory and office workers in United States’ cities. Now from breakfast and lunch trucks, these sandwiches are still sold to people who usually work in urban industrial areas across the United States. The submarine sandwich, called a hoagie in Philadelphia, is one such sandwich that was probably invented by Italian street vendors near industrial shipyards around 1900. It is a long crusty Italian-style roll, cut lengthwise down the center, and filled with sliced cold meats and cheeses, shredded lettuce, and drizzled olive oil that was common in Italian American communities. The “sub” has become the center fast-food chains, but remains a feature of lunch trucks and some food carts throughout the United States.

### *Hot Dogs*

Of all sandwiches, hot dogs are the most popular and iconic street food. Hamburgers are more common, but are not usually served as street food. Hot dogs are sausages, specifically frankfurters (supposedly from Frankfurt, Germany) and wieners (originally from Vienna, Austria)—all the names are used interchangeably. Modern hot dogs are made in two basic forms, cased and skinless. Cased



A classic Chicago-style hot dog from Franny's near Chicago, Illinois. (Courtesy of Bruce Kraig)

hot dogs are made in the traditional sausage maker's way, by stuffing very finely ground meat and other ingredients into a tube made from animal intestines or casings made from plant fibers. Natural casings give cooked hot dogs a crunchy snap texture that many fans of the dish prefer. Skinless sausages are meat stuffed into casing, cooked, and smoked, and then the casing is stripped off. By far, skinless hot dogs outsell natural casing ones because they are much cheaper to make and sell.

Hot dogs are a prime example of United States' ethnic food history. As the names say, they were introduced by German immigrants beginning in the 1850s and then taken up by makers and vendors of other ethnicities, namely, East European Jews, Greeks, Italians, and later Latin Americans and south Asians such as Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Hot dogs have been served as street food in American cities and at amusement areas, such as seaside boardwalks, since at least the 1860s, and have been associated with sports events, especially baseball, for more than 100 years. There is hardly a public event at which hot dog vendors do not appear.

The basic hot dog found on street stands or carts or served from roller grilling appliance is a heated sausage, mostly pork-based, placed on a slit bun, and topped with mustard and perhaps ketchup. New Orleans's *Lucky Dogs* is one, though other toppings appear. Sometimes a thick cheese food sauce or shredded cheese is added as a topping. But many hot dogs are heated and dressed in a number of regional styles in the United States and around the world as well. In some places such as New York City and Chicago, all-beef dogs are preferred, but elsewhere, sausages made of pork and beef are common. New York City has more hot dog street carts than any other American city. Most of the hot dogs are called "dirty water dogs" because they are heated and held in water just under the boiling point. The New York style is a small 1-1/2–2 oz sausage set in a heated bun and topped with yellow mustard, chopped raw onions, or chopped onions that are griddled and mixed with a light tomato sauce mixture. Sauerkraut might also be a condiment. Some hot dogs are griddled until browned on a hot metal sheet (griddled) and served with the same condiments.

In other parts of United States' East Coast and the South, other styles are favored. One of these is a hot dog covered in a meat sauce, usually called "chili." The chili is usually ground beef mixed with seasonings and a tomato-based liquid. Chopped onions and shredded cheese are also added to these kinds of hot dogs. Chili dogs are found from Rhode Island down to Florida, but in West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and some other parts of the South, chili is accompanied by a coleslaw to make the famous "Slaw Dog." Coleslaw is shredded cabbage (and sometimes carrots) mixed with either a vinegar or mayonnaise dressing. The result is a messy, but filling dish.

In the Midwest, two basic styles are common, the Chicago-style hot dog and Coney. Chicago dogs are all-beef sausages, water bathed, placed on a heated bun, and topped with mustard, bright green relish, chopped fresh onions, tomato slices, pickle spears, and small spicy hot “sport peppers,” and never with ketchup. Coney are associated with the Detroit, Michigan area, and are flat-griddled beef and pork sausages, set in buns and topped with mustard and a thick or thin meat sauce made with beef hearts. Both styles are served as take-out dishes, and no ballpark or amusement area is without them.

One hot dog style is a fusion of ingredients used in tacos and the American hot dog. In the American southwest, Arizona in particular, a new style of hot dogs appeared in the 1980s. The Sonoran Hot Dog is also known as the Mexican Hot Dog, or Tijuana Dog, and even “danger dog” in Los Angeles. When made “all the way” it is a griddled or grilled hot dog, wrapped in bacon—or covered in cooked bacon bits—then loaded with cooked pinto beans, chopped onions, chopped tomatoes, mayonnaise, crumbled or shredded cheese, Mexican red or green salsa, mustard, sometimes ketchup, and it can also have sliced radishes or cucumbers and a roasted Mexican pepper alongside it. An estimated 200 Sonoran Hot Dog carts and stands are in Tucson, Arizona, and more in Phoenix. Across the United States, many hot dog restaurants that serve different styles from around the country also serve some version of this Mexican American specialty.

### ***Bratwurst***

Bratwurst is a German word meaning “cooked,” by various methods. When Germans began migrating to the United States in large numbers beginning in the 1850s, they brought their favorite foods, especially sausages and beer. Bratwurst was one of them. Bratwurst is usually prepared from its fresh, raw state, but some versions are also smoked. Fresh bratwursts are almost always cooked on grills; for tailgating and in street festivals, open charcoal fires are used. In North America, especially Wisconsin, the sausages are either cooked directly or first simmered in water or beer—usually the latter—and then heated on the grill. Smoked brats are most often flat griddled or cooked quickly on a grill. When served, these kinds of bratwursts should be put on a special bratwurst bun that is larger, crustier, and chewier than a hot dog bun. Toppings are traditionally a brown mustard made in the style of the German city of Düsseldorf, and onions, with sauerkraut, an option depending on the region and state.

In Wisconsin, there is not a public event that does not have bratwurst stands, and many have sprung up around the Midwest. One of the most famous is in Bucyrus, Ohio, where an annual Bratwurst Fest has been held since 1967. In this area that has been heavily settled by Germans, at least a dozen vendors sell grilled brats, some



on buns, others on rye bread, and all with mustard, onions, and optional sauerkraut and horseradish.

### ***Polish Sausage***

Polish sausage is an alternative to hot dogs at many places. Named for various sausages made in Eastern Europe, the Polish sausage is a pork and beef, or all-beef, coarse-grind sausage, thicker in dimension than a regular hot dog, heavily seasoned with garlic, and naturally cased. It is almost always grilled on an open fire or flat griddled. The sandwich is topped with mustard and freshly chopped onions. In Chicago, the home of Maxwell Street Polish, a third-pound sausage is striped mustard and a thick layer of grilled and caramelized onions. Customers can add the other usual Chicago-style toppings, including hot sport peppers, but never ketchup. Maxwell Street Polish became very popular in the city, and many hot dog stands also serve it.

### ***Fusion and Gourmet Sausages***

Newer fusion styles of hot dogs have arisen in urban areas across the United States, many of them served from food trucks. Now popular Asian ingredients are staple toppings in these places. *Asia Dog* is a portable stand that started in Brooklyn, New York, and now appears at various festivals around the city. Their hot dogs have become popular for toppings that range from Korean to Thai. One is a barbecued pork belly with scallions and cucumber, another a Thai-style sauce made of mango, onion, peanuts, and fish sauce, among other ingredients. Korean toppings are used in several street trucks in Los Angeles, Seattle, and other cities. Bulgogi and Galbi, marinated strips of grilled meats, and kimchi, spicy hot pickled vegetables, are among the characteristic Korean preparations put on these hot dogs. So-called Japanese hot dogs originated in Vancouver, BC, Canada, and have migrated to the United States. Here Japanese teriyaki-grilled strips of meat in a sweet marinade, seaweed, savory pancakes, and spicy noodles are included in the toppings. All these versions show how flexible hot dogs can be as platforms for the integration of ethnic cultural tastes.

## **Wrapped Foods**

### ***Tacos, Enchiladas, Burritos, Flatbreads***

Mexican food traditions have greatly influenced North American traditions, none more so than in wrapped foods. These are like sandwiches except that they have thin outer shells that enclose fillings of various kinds. Wraps do not have to fully enclose

food, but can be partial. Tacos are the most widely consumed such dish. Tacos shells are tortillas, made of dried corn that is soaked in lime water, then ground into dough, flattened into thin rounds, and toasted on a hot flat metal sheet, or griddle. Wheat-flour tortillas are a common variation in North America. The vendor takes a tortilla in hand, fills it with a usually cooked filling, and serves it forth. Fillings are usually made from shredded meat, pork, beef, or chicken (less common) mixed with chili pepper-favored sauce and often topped with shredded cheese, chopped tomatoes, chopped onions, and cream cheese. There are many variations on the basic theme, including newly popular fish tacos (usually fried catfish, tilapia, or shrimp), Korean-style tacos (with grilled beef and kim chee, or Korean spicy pickled vegetables), and many vegetarian options available in upscale food trucks. In areas with newer Mexican and Central American immigrants, some specialties such as brains, eyes, tongue, and tripe tacos are popular. One variation more acceptable to most Americans is the *fajita*, a marinated skirt steak that is grilled and served with spicy sauce, cooked sliced green peppers and onions, and sometimes shredded cheese on a taco. Street carts and stands with flat griddles usually serve some type of fajita.

North American tacos originated on the Mexican-American border that runs from Texas west to California, though they are very ancient in Mexico proper. Tacos, meaning “wad” or “plug” in Spanish, is slang for handheld food and implies a filling dish meant to be eaten “on the run.” Until the 1970s, tacos were mostly confined to the American Southwest, California, and wherever there were concentrations of Mexican Americans. Gradually, and with the spread of taco fast-food chains from California, such as Taco Bell, this dish became very popular. Tacos are now sold from stands, carts, and trucks across the country. They are so popular and numerous in Los Angeles, for example, that truck owners have been cleared from streets by local authorities.

*Enchiladas* are based on the same principle as tacos, only they are larger and often served as main courses in restaurants covered in a Mexican-style sauce. *Burritos*, literally “little burros,” is a food born in California in the 1930s. In its original form, the burrito is a large wheat-flour tortilla wrapped in a package with a filling, usually shredded meat cooked in sauce and mixed with beans and rice. The burrito is now widely found on breakfast and other food trucks, at take-out places, and even in some vending machines. They are also common in chain fast-food restaurants with various fillings, such as scrambled eggs for breakfast.

*Flatbreads* such as pitas can be thought of as sandwiches, but they are usually more fully wrapped around their fillings than a normal cut-in-two bread sandwich base. Flatbreads for wrapping are soft thin wheat-based breads that are oven baked before use. *Shawarma* (Middle Eastern), *gyros* (Greece), and *Tacos Arabes* (Puebla, Mexico) all appear as fillings for flatbreads of various kinds. They are all large cones of layered meats, normally lamb, put in a long spit and roasted over an open flame. The meat is cut from the core in thin slices and served on flatbread

that is usually rolled up, served with a dressing or sauce, and eaten out of hand. Presliced gyros and related meat preparations are served from street stands, sometimes cooked on a flat griddle, while some specialized food trucks cook the meat on the spot. *Kebabs* that are so common in the Middle East also make appearances as street food in the United States. Meats—lamb, beef, or chicken—are skewered with onions and other vegetables and cooked over an open flame. Kebabs are served with sauces and often eaten on a flatbread.

One kind of flatbread is now a standard American dish served in all kinds of eating places including street-food vehicles. Brought by Italian immigrants before 1900, and found only in their mostly urban communities, pizza began to spread across the United States in the late 1950s and 1960s. It morphed into many styles with many toppings, but basically it is a flat dough round covered in a tomato sauce (“white pizza” is just cheese), with cheese, chopped vegetable, and optional sausage toppings. As street food, it is sold from carts, and some upscale food trucks make fancy versions with exotic toppings. Pizza is probably United States’ premier fairly healthy snack food, unlike packaged snack chips.

## Stuffed Foods

Stuffing means a wrapper, usually pastry, which totally encloses a filling and then is baked, fried, or steamed. *Tamales* comprise a kind of Mexican food that is widespread, though not to the same extent as tacos. They are long rolls of corn dough that are filled with shredded meats cooked in sauce or sweet fruits, then wrapped in a corn or banana husk, tied into a bundle and steamed. Two kinds of tamales exist in North America: the standard Mexican style made with corn dough and the Mississippi Delta tamale. The latter comes from the region for which it is named but can also be found on street stands, carts, and fairs as far north as Chicago. These are made with coarse cornmeal, filled mainly with cooked pork and a spicy sauce composed of different ingredients than its Mexican counterparts.

*Dumplings* of various kinds are a major form of stuffed foods, ranging from Chinese steamed dumplings to Italian raviolis. Many of the world’s dumplings migrated to the United States, and some have become street food, as they are in their native lands. Chinese dumplings that go under the name *dim sum* or “snacks” come in many varieties. *Jiao* are made from thin rice wrappers, filled with chopped meat or vegetables and then steamed. *Bao*, from northern China, are either thicker wheat- or rice-flour wrappers, made into large balls and also steamed. Lightly poached and fried *Guo Tie*, or pot stickers, and *Shaomai*, small steamed dumplings, can all be found in American street-food venues, mostly in food trucks and fairs. Thai and Vietnamese dumplings similar to their Chinese cousins usually accompany other dishes in food trucks. Of all Asian dumpling-like dishes, deep-fried *Cheun Gyun* or spring/egg rolls, remain the most popular.

European and Latin American dumplings have places in the street-food scene. Empanada is a generic name for a wide range of foods made from a flour dough, rolled out thinly, cut into circles, filled with chopped meat, or cheese, or vegetable fillings, sealed, and then baked or fried. There are literally hundreds of types of empanadas, most of them sold from food trucks and at fairs. Wherever vehicles display food from Ecuador, Columbia, Argentina, or Brazil, to name the most popular, empanadas will be sold.

More specialized dumplings include two foods often thought of as meat pies and the other as a fruit pie. In upper Michigan, Wisconsin, and parts of Minnesota, Cornish pasties are local specialties served at fairs and festivals. They are thick pastries, filled with ground meat, chopped potatoes, often carrots and root vegetables, formed into squares or rounds and baked. The Runza is the Nebraska State dish, also a meat and vegetable dumpling, but originating in Russia. Fried pies are thought to be southern in origin, but can be found at fairs almost everywhere. These are square-shaped pastries filled with dried fruit that are deep-fried until crispy.

## Deep-Fried Food

For more than 200 years, Americans have loved fried food. It is everywhere on the food landscape, in most corporate fast-food restaurants and in street food. While most portable food carts and stands cannot do deep frying for technical reasons, food trucks and fair food are loaded with fried products. Of these, two types predominate, savory and sweet. French-fried potatoes top the list of favorite deep-fried food, either alone or an accompaniment to another food. Fried chicken might be United States' best-known fried meat dish. It can be done in a number of styles, from Chinese to American southern. Buffalo wings is a recent addition—seasoned chicken wings, deep-fried and served with sour cream and a spicy hot sauce. Other foods in this category are fried cheese curds, nachos-fried tortilla wedges swerved with a soft cheese food topping, and, at the Wisconsin State Fair, a bacon and cheese hamburger served on a fried Krispy Kreme doughnut.

Fried stick foods are state and country fair favorites and can be found on street trucks, as well. Corn dogs are the oldest and best-known fried food on a stick. Dating from at least the 1920s, these are hot dogs that are impaled on a stick, dipped in a cornmeal batter, and then deep-fried to a golden brown. At the Illinois State Fair, for example, there are a dozen stands, many serving the famous Cozy Dog. Many other savory stick foods followed, among them bacon, batter-dipped fish, patty sausage dipped in batter, pizza, macaroni and cheese, pickle slices, and battered spam. Nothing escapes the batter bowl!

Sweet fried foods have also long been favorites. Doughnuts in numerous forms, filled and plain, and crullers are sold from street stands and trucks, especially for

breakfast. Fried batters, especially funnel cakes (poured into hot oil in strings and served with powdered sugar) and elephant ears (flat, round pastries), appear at almost all fairs and amusement parks. In recent years, Latin American *buñuelos* (fried dough balls) and churros (fried dough sticks sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon) have spread to carts, trucks, and fairs. Fried Coke is one recent creation, made by mixing Coca-Cola syrup with batter, deep frying it, and pouring more syrup on top of the final product. *Sweet stick foods* are common in many fairs. Among them are battered deep-fried chocolate cake, S'mores, banana splits, fresh fruits, Oreo cookies, Twinkies, and candy bars, especially Snickers, Milky Way, Three Musketeers, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, and Tootsie Rolls.

## Sweet Foods

Sweet foods are iconic street and fair foods. Some were introduced at World's Fairs, such as caramel corn in 1876, Cracker Jacks in 1893, and ice-cream cones and cotton candy in 1904. Others, such as candy apples after 1908 on the Jersey Shore, appeared as snack treats at amusement parks. Sweetened popcorn and spun sugar cotton candy can be found in every fair and amusement area. Cold treats are even more popular. In the late 19th century, ice cream was sold by "hokey pokey" men from mobile carts. In the 1920s, small motorized trucks led by the Good Humour Company sold the newly invented chocolate covered ice-cream bars, and ice-cream trucks have roamed American streets ever since. Popsicles, shaved ices, coarsely ground and syrup flavored ices, and other frozen treats are sold almost everywhere people gather for fun.

Commercially made candies are the most widely consumed street food if newspaper stands, kiosks, and vending machines are considered. They are produced in many varieties by major companies such as Mars, Hershey, and Nestlé. However, one candy is almost completely associated with seaside resorts, saltwater taffy. Taffy is a semisoft candy made from sugar, cornstarch, corn syrup, and flavorings. Taffy originated in England about 1800, but by the 1880s, shops in Atlantic City were selling it packaged in souvenir boxes as "Salt Water" because it was made at a seashore resort. Today, saltwater taffy trucks can be found at most fairs where it is "pulled" by machines in customers' view, adding to its universal appeal.

*Bruce Kraig*

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## African American Street Food

Since the 18th century, African Americans have been a vital part of the U.S. street-food scene. Anywhere a lakeside city, river town, seaport, or transportation hub sprouted up in colonial United States, African American vendors were likely to be there roaming the streets in search of customers. African Americans have a deep history of selling beverages, fruit and vegetable produce, and prepared foods all over the country, including diverse places as Charleston, South Carolina, Chicago, Illinois, New Orleans, Louisiana, New York, New York, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and San Francisco, California.

Slavery and racism loomed large in the street vendor's life. Prior to the Civil War, African American street vendors tended to be recently freed slaves or aged or disabled slaves who could no longer perform the arduous tasks required of domestic servants and field slaves. Some plantation masters saw an opportunity to make additional income by allowing their slaves to sell goods in nearby towns. These goods were often surplus crops from the plantation and eggs, poultry, and vegetables the slaves raised themselves. Municipal officials were wary of having a large influx of African American vendors, so they regulated the practice. Even with the attempts to restrict this commercial activity, African American street foods proved tremendously popular with people of all races. Both the master and the slaves benefited financially from this arrangement. Most earnings went to the master. Yet, in some circumstances, the slaves got a portion and could save enough money to eventually purchase their own freedom and that of other slaves.

In the antebellum North, street vendors successfully formed a profitable, secondary economy with Native American suppliers and poor white customers. White elites sought to stamp out these vending relationships because they operated outside of the established public market system that the very same elites created for profit. By 1740, African American women were so successful at selling boiled hot corn and fruit in New York City that a municipal law was passed to specifically prohibit their livelihood. Violators were publicly whipped.

Despite the hostile environments they often encountered, the street vendors carried on many West African cultural expressions that were characteristic of the market sellers in their ancestral homes. They wore colorful outfits and bandanas as they sold food. They sang rhythmic, musical street cries in falsetto to attract their customers. They also balanced their food baskets on their heads as they traveled

from place to place. Not surprisingly, these urban characters fueled a fountain of folklore within African American and mainstream popular culture. Some scholars have argued that “ragtime,” the progenitor of jazz, was inspired by a New Orleans street vendor who sold rags in the late 1800s. African American vendors also permeated high culture when George Gershwin spotlighted their street cries in his 1930s’ opera *Porgy and Bess*.

After Emancipation, street vending offered African Americans one of the few opportunities to be entrepreneurial. Women particularly prospered in the street vending trade. As millions of African Americans left the South and settled in other parts of the United States, street food played a critical role in nourishing poor migrants who didn’t have the resources, physical space, or cooking equipment to recreate traditional southern food in their new homes. Vendors thrived where the grocery stores were either too expensive or didn’t have enough inventory to meet the demand of working-class African Americans. Though many rudimentary restaurants known as “ankle joints (selling pig’s feet),” “fish houses,” and “chicken shacks” were open for business, customers counted on the street vendors for cheaper prices. As early as the 1890s, street vendors sold fried chicken, boiled pig’s feet, roasted possum, baked sweet potatoes, watermelon, and other southern favorites in the black neighborhoods of major urban centers.

Around the turn of the 20th century, African American street vendors had become adept at successfully selling the street foods associated with other ethnic groups. In Chicago, African Americans did a brisk trade in hot dogs. In New York City and San Francisco, African American vendors were known for their specialty of spicy chicken tamales. In Philadelphia, the boiled corn dish called hominy was associated with African Americans despite its clear Native American provenance. Philadelphians also patronized African American street vendors to get a taste of a Caribbean soup called pepper pot.

## Major Street Foods

### Fried Chicken with Hot Bread

Often the street foods offered were tremendously provincial, yet the combination of fried chicken and hot bread has endured as a universal and popular menu item. Many vendors were former Big House plantation cooks who gained years of culinary expertise in making this popular plantation breakfast pairing. The most famous vendors were the African American women who sold fried chicken along with a biscuit, hot roll, pancake, or waffle at train depots throughout the South, particularly the train station at Gordonsville, Virginia.

## Sweet Snacks

Sweet snacks form the next biggest category of popular street food. Foremost in reputation were the enchanting confections of Charleston, South Carolina, and New Orleans, Louisiana. The Charleston vendors sold candies with a strong West African heritage. “Groundnut cakes” were made from peanuts (associated with the slave trade), molasses, sugar, and butter that were boiled together and then cooled. Similarly made were a coconut and molasses confection called “monkey meat,” and a soft, sesame seed candy called “benne cakes.” Benne is a close approximation of a West African dialect word for sesame seeds. Drawing upon two rich culinary traditions from France and West Africa, New Orleans vendors sold traditional French candies and desserts that they gave their own culinary and cultural spin. The French candied almonds called “pralines” came to Louisiana, but in the Creole kitchens of New Orleans, they were transformed into sugary nougat patties that contained almonds or pecans. The vendors renamed the traditional French rice beignets they sold “*calas*,” using a dialect name for a rice fritter that is a longtime popular treat in West Africa.

Today, African American street-food purveyors are experimenting with traditional foods by reinterpreting them with upscale ingredients, fusing them with other cuisines, or by changing ingredients to make it vegan. Still, some version of fried chicken and hot bread, usually waffles, remains a popular choice. Aside from food trucks, street vendors continue to sell traditional foods at African American cultural events.

*Adrian Miller*

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## Uzbekistan

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Indo-European and Turko-Mongolian peoples have been living and warring in what is today Uzbekistan for more than 3,000 years. Mixing pastoral nomadic, agricultural, and urban settlement traditions, rulers and inhabitants of Uzbekistan have included Persians, Turks, Mongolians, Arabs, and Slavs. Great empires that have controlled the country’s territory include those of Chingiz Khan, Tamerlane, and Tsarist Russia. Contemporary Uzbekistan became a republic of the Soviet Union in 1924 and gained full sovereignty in 1991 after the Soviet collapse.

Street food—often sold in Central Asia’s famous bazaars—has been a staple of the region since the reign of the Uzbek-born world conqueror Tamerlane



(late 14th century). They reflect the cultures and peoples who have traveled along the Silk Road through this Central Asian nation and woven themselves into its culinary fabric. Persians, Turks, Arabs, Mongols, and Russians, to name a few, have left their gastronomic mark on this lively and delicious food culture that reflects pastoralist, nomadic, and farming culinary traditions.

Street foods here can come from vendors who've set up little grills on the sidewalk next to a bus station or strip mall, from women who've plopped down on street corner with huge fabric-draped baskets full of hot breads or savory turnovers or a small merchant who's procured a pallet of ice-cream sandwiches. But most reliably, street-food vendors appear in Uzbekistan's colorful bazaars where they have more space and sometimes even makeshift tables and chairs to accommodate diners.

Central Asian countries that border Uzbekistan—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan—share similarities with Uzbek street food with *shashlik*, clay oven bread and dumplings being most ubiquitous. Every medium- to large-size town in Uzbekistan boasts at least one bazaar held on special bazaar days and in some cases every day.

In the Uzbek capital of Tashkent, the most popular is the Alaysky or Aloy Bazaar located near the governmental center. Here you will find whole halls and sections devoted to rice, vegetables, dairy, meat, spices, and even a special area where ethnic Korean women sell ready-to-eat kimchi along with garlicky salads made with strips of carrots, beets, and eggplant.

## Major Street Foods

### *Plov*

Called *palov*, *pilaf*, or *pilau* in other countries, this flavored rice dish might seem like an unlikely street food, but is actually one of the most commonly offered food items on Uzbek streets and in its bazaars. In a country where disposable dishware is still a rarity, the rich rice dish is often served in ceramic bowls with aluminum spoons that patrons are expected to use and return. Patrons can also bring their own. The national dish of Uzbekistan, plov is often also called “osh,” which means “food” in Uzbek and can refer to simple stews in Persian.

Different regions and seasons call for different treatments of the dish, but the essential elements include rice, carrots, onions, cottonseed oil, spices (often paprika, cumin, turmeric), and usually a little meat—beef or mutton. Variations can include the inclusion of raisins, quince slices, sheep tail fat, pomegranate seeds, hot peppers, whole heads of garlic, hard-boiled eggs, black-eyed peas, and more. The resulting orange mounds of nutty, oily rice will almost always be prepared in a large, iron, demi-spherical pot called *qozon*.

In exchange for a modest price, customers can fill up on a large bowl of the savory rice topped with a few nuggets of meat (commonly beef). They can eat the dish standing up, squatting on the ground, or try to snag a little table and chair if the vendor has set one up.

Tourists to Uzbekistan are often surprised by the oiliness of the dish and the pool of orange oil that remains at the bottom of a pot. But chefs actually strive to produce a greasy *plov*, noting that it is full of calories and lipids for brain function. Many Uzbeks still eat *plov* with their hands, and for them, the mark of a good *plov* lies in the trail of oil that slides down to their elbows while lifting bites to their mouths. Cottonseed oil, a plentiful and cheap by-product of the nation's number one crop, gives the dish its distinctive orange hue and a vaguely nutty flavor. Some have expressed concern, however, about pesticide residue that may remain in the seeds of the historically heavily sprayed crop.

### ***Shashlik***

Known as kebabs or shish kebabs in other cultures, this (seasoned and often marinated) skewered meat cooked over hardwood coal is another favorite in Uzbekistan and all over Central Asia.

Diners typically order their meat of choice (chicken, mutton, beef, *kofta*/ground, liver, and, in some heavily Russian areas, pork) and eat it with a fresh, crusty, round loaf of clay oven bread called “non.” Skewers can be accompanied by raw onions, pickled onions, fresh cilantro, and hot pepper- and basil-infused vinegar. Seasonings often not only include salt and pepper but also dustings of cumin powder, crushed coriander seeds, and cayenne. Meat cubes are commonly interspersed with chunks of fat that are savored just as enthusiastically as the meat and serve to baste the meat as it sizzles over the coals.

### ***Samsa***

Much like the South Asian samosa, this savory turnover makes for an excellent handheld meal on the go. While some can be cooked in conventional ovens, most are baked while stuck to the inside walls of clay *tandir* ovens.

Doughs can vary from strong and chewy to flaky and shattery, taking the shape of gumdrops, triangles, and domes. Fillings can change seasonally and by regions with springtime bringing *samsas* full of chives, green garlic, and other young greens, while fall finds them stuffed with chopped onions and the flesh of hard-shelled gourds like pumpkin.

The most common filling, however, is chopped mutton and onions blended with nubbins of fat from the rump of the region's prized fat-tailed sheep. Although the Uzbeks rarely eat lamb (preferring the more economical mutton), lamb can be substituted in recipes.

## ***Manti***

Called *mantu*, *mantou*, and *mandu* in other cultures, these steamed, noodle-encased dumplings stuffed with savory fillings (almost identical to those in *samsas*) make for a slightly messy but delicious street food. Holding mutton, pumpkin, and green fillings, their delicate, wet, steamed noodle exteriors make them hard to eat by hand, especially since some vendors top them with a tangy, watery yogurt sauce and chopped green herbs or oil.

## **Other Street Foods**

### **Laghman**

If made properly, the delicious, pliant noodles for this noodle soup dish will be stretched from a single ball of dough by a strapping chef right before your eyes outdoors. If you're less fortunate, they'll come from dry packaged spaghetti.

Best eaten on the streets of the Uzbek–Kyrgyz border town of Osh, this dish bears distinct influences of Western Chinese Uyghur people who live over the border from Central Asia. In the best versions, fresh noodles are stretched and immediately tossed into a hot broth, rich with tomatoes, peppers, garlic, onion, and small amounts of meat. Condiments can include fresh cilantro, flavored vinegar, and a bright, spicy chili paste. At his best, a laghman vendor can produce an amazing show followed by breathtaking chow.

### ***Qurut***

A nod to Uzbekistan's pastoralist population, these hard, little yogurt balls are favorites among kids and as snacks with alcohol. The salty and sour balls taste a bit like a pungent cheese and are made by straining and drying yogurt, rolling it into balls and letting them dry in the sun. The resulting gumball-like snacks can be eaten with bread like a little concentrated cheese or sucked on like jawbreakers. An ideal way to preserve cultured dairy for long voyages, *qurut* can be an acquired taste and smell for visitors.

### ***Non***

While not exactly a street food, these warm, crusty, chewy frisbees are sold on Uzbek streets everywhere and can make for some of the tastiest snacking around. No loaves from professional bakers can rival baguettes for their combination of a chewy, crisp crust and a large, open, moist almost eggy crumb. Eat it with garlicky, Korean beet or carrot salads, or on their own and enjoy.

Just be sure to treat Uzbek bread with respect. Locals tear it (never cut it) to share, use all of it until its gone ( rather than throwing it away), always place it right side up ( never upside down), and often kiss it if it falls on the ground.

### **Humma**

These deep-fried wheat-flour dough pucks are often stuffed with a smidgen of ground meat or potatoes and bear a very close resemblance to the common Russian street snack *ponchiki* or *piroshki*. An extremely cheap, calorific, often warm, savory snack, they are a huge favorite with the ambulatory dining crowd.

A holdover from the days of Russian rule, ice-cream sandwiches and soft serve ice-cream cones show up on the street sold from boxes or stands fairly often in Uzbekistan. They taste quite a lot like their Western counterparts.

*Monica Eng*

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# V

## Venezuela

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Venezuela is a country located on the northeastern shoulder of the South American continent. It is bordered by Guyana and Brazil to the south and Colombia on the west. Venezuela's long coastline along the Caribbean Sea gives its main population centers a decidedly Caribbean character. Venezuela has a diverse geography and climate. The northern extension of the Andes Mountains covers much of the southeastern part of the country, while other mountains border the northwest. In between are broad grasslands called *llano*, and in low areas are hot and humid tropical lands. Major rivers run through the country, the best known being the huge Orinoco, which runs just under the southern mountains. Venezuela has one of the world's most varied ecosystems that includes large tropical forests, mountain forests, rivers, and coasts. It has species of plants and animals that are found nowhere else and is a destination for ecotourism. Foodstuffs, as well, come from each of the regions—grazing animals from the high plains, fish from rivers and coasts, and plenty of tropical fruits and vegetables. All of them go into street food.

### The National Dish

The Venezuelan national dish is called *Pabellón Criollo*. Not only is it good to eat, but it also illustrates the history of the Venezuelan people. The base is beef boiled in water with onion. Cattle were not native to the Americas but were brought by Spanish settlers, as were the onions we use today. Bell peppers, tomatoes, plantains, black beans, and rice also compose the final dish. Peppers are native to the Americas, but sweet bell peppers were not developed on that side of the Atlantic. Rather, hot peppers

were taken to Spain and bred by monks into the sweet varieties we now know and were then returned to the Americas. Tomatoes come from South America as do almost all the beans we eat today. Plantains originated in South India. Rice came from Southeast Asia, was imported to the Mediterranean region, including Spain, in Roman times, and eventually made its way to Venezuela and elsewhere. The word *criollo* means someone of European descent born in the Americas. This classic dish is exactly that.

The name “Venezuela” is thought to mean “Little Venice” from the Italian city of the same name. Spaniards conquered Venezuela in the 16th century and mixed with the indigenous peoples. Today about half the population is mestizo, or mixed, along with a sizable number of Europeans, people of African descent, and a small number of native people (who live mainly in the Amazon jungle area of the country). Spanish is the country’s official language, but English is widely spoken because of long-standing contacts with English-speaking Caribbean nations. Venezuela’s food mirrors this mixture of peoples and cultures and the many international contacts.

## Major Street Foods

### *Arepas*

The names *arepa* and Venezuela are synonymous, though they are also popular in neighboring Colombia and other Central and South American countries. *Arepas* are one of the national foods and reveal both the history of Venezuela’s food and its regional character. The basic *arepa* is a thick cake made of finely ground cornmeal, made into a dough, toasted on a griddle, then split horizontally, and filled with various ingredients. It is often griddled in butter and to be done properly should be placed in a hot oven to give it an outer crust. Another version, made in the upland areas of the country, is made with wheat flour. There are many kinds of *arepas*. The most popular are *arepa de queso* (filled with various cheeses, especially a soft



Freshly prepared grilled *arepas*, made with corn flour and filled with cheese. (Uli Danner/Dreamstime.com)

white cheese), *arepa mecahada* (filled with cooked shredded chicken or beef), *arepa pelua* (with shredded beef and cheddar cheese), *arepa de chicharrón* (with crispy fried pork skin), *arepa de Perico* (eggs scrambled with finely chopped vegetables and white cheese), *arepa de domino* (with black beans and cheese), *arepa con molida* (with spiced ground beef), *arepa de coco* (coconut), and even *arepa dulce* (sweet). Venezuelans eat other varieties, some with fish, others with yucca (manioc or cassava) or vegetables. *Arepas* are quite delicious and have made their way to North America where they are served in Venezuelan restaurants and a growing number of urban food trucks.

### ***Pepito***

The *pepito* is a sandwich that is one of Venezuela's most popular street foods. It is made with a soft roll, similar to a baguette, split down the center, and then filled with any of a variety of ingredients. The most popular are grilled chicken dipped in sauce, beef in a sauce, fried eggs, cheese, or mixtures of these ingredients. The *pepito* is heavily garnished with shredded lettuce, sliced or chopped tomatoes, avocado slices, *guasacaca* sauce (similar to guacamole), ketchup, tomato-based sauces, mayonnaise, and lots of other sauces. Customers typically tell the vendor what they want from the long list of possible fillings.

### ***Mandocas***

Like doughnuts, these are fried cornmeal dough rings. They are popular for breakfast and also snacks. Though they are made at home, the thick fried rings are also sold by street vendors. The most famous *mandoca* is prepared with plantains, but the original version appears to have been a soft cheese variety. Typically, a plantain is cooked and mashed together with finely ground cornmeal and a local molasses called *papelón*. Formed into rings, it is deep-fried and served warm often with fresh cheese or butter.

### ***Patacones***

*Patacones* are fried plantain chips universally known in other parts of Latin America as *tostones*. Ripe plantains are sliced, dried, and then fried in hot oil. On the street, they are fried once, but in restaurants and by commercial food processors, they can be fried twice in the manner of French-fried potatoes. *Patacones* can be served as accompaniments to other dishes, but usually are just salted and served in small bags for snacks. Venezuelans love baseball, and there is hardly a ball game at which spectators do not happily munch on *patacones*.



## Other Street Foods

### Hot Dogs

Imported from North America, hot dogs are now sold on the streets of many Venezuelan cities. They are usually made of pork, steamed, placed on steamed buns and then loaded with all kinds of toppings to make almost a full meal on a bun. Toppings can be chopped potatoes, shredded cabbage, mustard, or a pink sauce made from mixing ketchup and mayonnaise, and often the ensemble is topped with crisply fried potatoes.

### *Empanadas*

Fried triangular pastries similar to those found throughout Latin America, *empanadas* have long been sold as street food in Venezuela. They can be made from wheat flour or corn flour and filled with everything from cheese to shredded meats and vegetables. Vendors will often have spicy sauces on their carts and stands because Venezuelans love their street foods heavily sauced.

### *Shawarma*

Middle Eastern immigrants, mainly Lebanese, brought skewered meats to Latin America in the 20th century. Today, vendors cook skewered beef or chicken chunks threaded with onions, green peppers, and tomatoes on open grills.

### Fruit

Due to its climate and geography, Venezuela produces a huge variety of fruits that are often sold fresh on the streets. Mango, papaya, sweet bananas, coconut melons, pineapple, and guava are but some of them. They can be cut up and eaten plain, but a squirt of lemon juice is also a favorite way to eat them.

### Drinks

In a warm climate, refreshing drinks are always ready at stands and small open stalls. Fresh fruit juices are always popular as are *batidos*, fruit juice thickened in a blender, and *merengada*, or milk shakes. Sugarcane juice or *papelón*, and coconut milk are widely consumed.

*Bruce Kraig*

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# W

## West Africa

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West Africa is a vast region bordered by the Sahara desert to the North and the Atlantic Ocean to the West and South. Several river systems run through the region, the most important being the Niger River and its tributaries. West Africa encompasses three climactic zones: desert in the north, savanna (grasslands) south of the desert, and tropical rain forest near the Atlantic Coast, roughly from Guinea to Nigeria. This ecological diversity led to the development of large-scale trade throughout the region and beyond.

Until the last half of the 19th century, European colonization in Africa was mostly limited to outposts along the coast. In 1885, the continent was portioned by the colonial powers, with France and England getting the lion's share and Portugal and Germany smaller areas. Only Liberia, established by the United States as a refuge for ex-slaves, remained independent. Portugal ruled Portuguese Guinea, now Guinea-Bissau. Togo and Cameroon were German colonies until the end of World War I, when each was split into two and administered as trust territories by France and Britain. French colonies were amalgamated into a vast French West African federation with its capital in Dakar, Senegal. The federation split up after the end of colonial rule into its constituent parts: Senegal, Mauritania, Mali (formerly French Sudan), Niger, Upper Volta (later Burkina Faso), and Guinea. British colonies included Gambia, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast (now Ghana), and Nigeria. English, French, and Portuguese remain the official languages of almost all these countries.

Before West Africa was colonized by Europe, caravan routes crisscrossed the grasslands, linking the desert in the north to the rain forests in the south. European explorers occasionally described the kinds of street foods they found in the larger trading towns. René Caillé, who traveled to Timbuktu disguised as a Moor in the 1820s, also passed through the great commercial hub, Jenne (in modern Mali), where he noticed that the butchers in the market “also thrust skewers through little pieces of meat, which they smoke-dry and sell retail.” He also saw hawkers in the street, selling food from the countryside, as well as milk, honey, kola nuts, and vegetable and animal butter. Some 70 years later, Captain Louis-Gustave Binger witnessed similar scenes in the town of Kong (modern Côte d’Ivoire). The hawkers in Kong were young girls who, aside from honey and kola nuts, also sold sweets and a confection that Binger describes as “little ginger breads”—most likely

fritters—made of millet, honey, and red peppers, alongside such fruits as bananas and papayas.

A different tradition of street food emerged in towns that sprang up along the Atlantic Coast as a result of the slave trade. A Dutch traveler, Pieter de Marees, described women along the Gold Coast (modern Ghana) in 1600 who sold *kenkey* in the marketplace, particularly to fishermen and others who could not prepare it themselves. *Kenkey* is a staple food prepared from fermented maize; it takes several days to prepare and so lends itself well to specialization and to sale in the marketplace or simply by vendors hawking along the street.

Most of these street foods—meat skewers, kola nuts, fritters, fruit, *kenkey*—are still sold today. Honey has been replaced by industrially produced sugar as the sweetener of choice. Kola nuts are not exactly foods; they are chewed but not swallowed. They grow only in the rain forest, but have long been a luxury item in the grasslands and were one of the major commodities traded along caravan routes. The taste is very bitter, but the nuts contain a high dose of caffeine, so that they act as a stimulant.

Though street foods have a long history in West Africa, their place in the African diet was, until relatively recently, entirely marginal. They were found mainly in larger urban centers, but the West African population was overwhelmingly rural. The growth of a modern rail and road transportation network in the 20th century permitted the movement of foodstuffs and of people, which contributed to a proliferation of the street foods in West Africa. New towns mushroomed, attracting migrants, many of them single men. Entrepreneurial women opened stalls in the marketplace—known as “chop bars” in Anglophone countries—where men with no woman to cook for them could purchase an inexpensive meal, particularly at midday.

Some vendors sell entire meals. Throughout West Africa, the format for such meals is standard, consisting of a large portion of starch supplemented by a soup or sauce; depending on the starch base, the sauce is either poured over it or a bite-sized portion is dipped into it. The ingredients depend on local availability and food preferences. Oil palm kernels, a product of the rain forest, yield oil used for preparing rich red sauces. Cassava leaf sauces are popular in Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone. Pepper soup is popular throughout the region. In Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria, pounded yams—“fofoo” in English and “foutou” in French—form a popular dish. (Yams must not be confused with sweet potatoes, erroneously called “yams” in the United States; yams are longer and larger, white inside, and not particularly sweet.) Increasingly, rice has become the starch of choice, especially in market stalls. It has long been grown in parts of West Africa, but, more recently, cheap imported Asian rice has become readily available. Cheap, easy to transport but also easy to prepare—unlike maize, sorghum, or millet, it has already been husked and winnowed—it is now served in marketplaces everywhere. A popular rice dish is *thiebou djen* (with fish) or *thiebou yap* (with meat).

### Asia in Africa

Perhaps the most surprising street foods, evidence of true globalization, are the items sold in Dakar and other large cities of French-speaking West Africa. These are bite-sized Vietnamese egg rolls (called *nem* in northern Vietnam), bits of meat in a fried wrapper that are sold in

special stalls by women. Both Senegal and Vietnam were French colonies, and in the early 20th century, Senegalese men were sent to Vietnam as soldiers. Some married Vietnamese women who returned home with them and opened stalls and restaurants.

Some modes of preparing staple starches have a more local distribution. These are typically foods that require labor-intensive preparation, often over a period of several days. This is most obvious in foods that require fermentation as part of the process of preparation. *Kenkey*—fermented maize balls wrapped in corn husks and steamed—are typical of southern Ghana. In the south of neighboring Côte d’Ivoire, the local specialty is *attieke*, cassava that has been grated, pressed, and fermented so that it has a consistency similar to couscous, with a pronounced sour kick. Both *kenkey* and *attieke* are easily sold on the street (the *attieke* is served in cones of plantain leaf) and are often accompanied with fried fish, another street food found only along the coast.

Traditional West African breakfasts usually take the form of porridges rather than stews. In the mornings, women may sell these porridges in the market or simply in front of their house as a means of earning a bit of extra cash. These porridges can be made with almost any starch: millet, sorghum, maize, rice, and even yams or plantains. They have the consistency of oatmeal and are sweetened (as liberally as possible!) with sugar and mixed with fresh, condensed, or curdled milk. Such curdled milk, not unlike yogurt, is often available on its own as a street food. Another similar kind of preparation found in Mali, Niger, and northern Côte d’Ivoire is *dègè*, a sweet paste traditionally made from millet mixed with honey and curdled milk. In Niger, alongside traditional *dègè*, one can find a modern variety flavored with ginger and mint. These pastes and porridges can be supplemented with boiled eggs or omelets, also available as street food in the mornings and sometimes throughout the day.

On the other hand, colonial cuisines have had a particular influence on African breakfasts, particularly served in street stalls, in this case run by (as well as for) men. In former French colonies, such stalls serve French-style breakfasts: baguettes, sometimes with butter or (as a substitute) mayonnaise, along with instant coffee mixed with a large quantity of sweetened condensed milk. Of course, in former English colonies, tea is served instead of coffee, and white bread in place of baguettes. Even though wheat does not grow in West Africa, bread is such a popular

food that flour is imported in large quantities, and bakeries constitute a very common small-scale enterprise. A modern variety of this kind of breakfast is known in Senegal as *tangana* (“heat” in Wolof) and is typically prepared not by Senegalese, but by migrant men from Niger. Along with *café au lait* with bread and butter (or mayonnaise), such a breakfast includes boiled eggs or omelet along with a meat stew. Such breakfasts have apparently grown so popular that they are now served throughout the entire day.

Different snacks tend to be associated with different times of day. There is no hard and set rule, of course, but different street foods tend to be available in the morning, the afternoon, and the evening.

Aside from boiled eggs and omelets, which can be eaten as snacks as well as part of breakfast, mornings are associated with millet and especially flour fritters. Millet fritters are more like cakes, regularly shaped and quite filling. They need to be prepared in advance and are generally served cold. However, flour fritters are far more common nowadays and can easily be prepared by young women outside their homes. These fritters are easy and quick to make by dropping large spoonful of batter into boiling oil. Vendors can prepare them to order so that customers can eat them fresh and piping hot, when they are best. Fried bean cakes—*akara*—are sometimes eaten in the morning as well, though they are more likely to be available throughout the day than flour fritters.

The greatest variety of snacks tends to be available in the afternoon. Some require no preparation, notably fruits: oranges, bananas, mangos, papayas, and more

### Burkina Faso's Roadside Kiosks

Croissants and pastries inspired by Burkina Faso's history as a French colony are served from carts everywhere in the capital city of Ouagadougou. But the roadside kiosks, or *maquis*, where mostly women dish out fast, cheap, hot meals to mostly male patrons take their inspiration from the country's natural vegetation and multiethnic tribal heritage. A common dish in every *maquis* is *tô*, a starch made from millet or corn flour and topped with sauces made from the fruit of the baobab tree, the seeds of the kapok tree, or chopped greens from the leaves of the *kenebdo* plant, all wild vegetation native to Burkina Faso.

Couscous with *niebe* beans and rice with sauces of stewed eggplant, yams, or tomatoes are cooked on open flames or atop propane tanks starting at dawn. *Gari*, or ground cassava, topped with a medley of fresh vegetables including peppers, onions, cucumbers, and a drizzle of palm tree oil is often served as a lighter alternative. Patrons quench their thirst with refreshing tumblers of ginger juice; *zoomkoom*, a punch made with millet flour, ginger, lemon juice, and tamarind; or *bissap*, a sweet herbal tea made from a hibiscus plant. Fried plantains served with a pinch of salt on the side satisfy the sweet tooth. *Manya Brachear*

occasionally guavas and pineapple. Boiled or roasted peanuts can easily be prepared in advance to be sold and eaten cold. Other foods are roasted, fried, or boiled in the street and sold hot. Ears of corn on the cob are roasted when they are in season (generally from July to September in the grasslands); occasionally, they will be boiled. Plantains are also roasted whole, but more often are cut up and fried. Known as *alloko* throughout Côte d'Ivoire, they are among the most popular of all street foods and served with a very spicy red sauce made from crushed red peppers and oil. Fried yams are also appreciated throughout West Africa, although they do not grow too far north of the rain forest. They are sliced in pieces to make something that both looks and tastes somewhat like very oversized French fries. Yams as well as cassava can also be boiled, though in this case, they must be served with a little sauce or other condiment or else they will be too bland.

Evening is the best time for grilled meats, especially lamb. Such meat is sometimes also available during the daytime, especially in the close vicinity of bus and taxi stops—generally one of the best places, aside from the marketplace, to find any kind of street food. Virtually the entire animal, including organ meats, is cut up into small pieces that can easily be skewered. Men tend to congregate around these grills after dinner; this tends to be a man's snack, both in its preparation and in its consumption.

West African countries tend to have their own bottling companies that manufacture European- and American-style beer and soft drinks. These are sold on the street as well as in shops, but on the street, they compete with locally made beverages. Home-brewed maize or sorghum beer is sold in open-air stalls, served straight from a large pot into calabashes split into two, which serve as drinking vessels. Of course, such beer stalls are not to be found in areas that are overwhelmingly Muslim. Islam forbids the consumption of alcohol; Muslims who flaunt the rule prefer to do so in private. On the other hand, anyone, whatever their religion or age, can consume sweet drinks, also readily available on the street. These include *lemburudji*—lemonade; *nyamakudji*—a ginger drink that resembles West Indian ginger beer without the carbonation; *bissap*—a sweet hibiscus flower drink; as well as drinks prepared from baobab or tamarind seeds.

In all, in the course of the second half of the 20th century, there has emerged a West African street-food culture that has built on traditional African elements while incorporating European and even Asian foodstuffs. Of course, there remain regional and national differences, but the large-scale movement of people as well as of foods has led, in the long run, to relative homogeneity.

## Major Street Foods

“Pepper soup”—*pépé soup* in French-speaking countries—is a clear broth made from meat, vegetables, and (as the name implies) lots of black pepper. A sauce made from peanut butter is particularly popular in the grasslands. These sauces are



often beef stews; beef can easily be cut into small pieces, so that all customers can enjoy a portion. In towns along the seacoast, such sauces are also often made with fish. In the interior, fresh fish is too expensive, though dried fish from the Niger River is a popular ingredient; because its flavor is so overpowering, a little goes a long way, and it is a cheap source of protein.

*Thiebou djen* (with fish) or *thiebou yap* (with meat) is a rice dish that has spread from Senegal throughout West Africa, a potent example of how regional dishes have been widely diffused along with migrants along modern transportation networks. The names for it in Ghana and Nigeria—Jollof rice—or in Côte d’Ivoire, where it is simply called *riz sénégalais*—Senegalese rice—openly acknowledge its foreign origins. It is a fried rice dish with a red coloring (from tomato paste), cooked with either fish or meat as well as with whatever vegetables are locally available. As a one-pot dish, it is particularly easily prepared and consumed in the market.

*Robert Launay*

### Note

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# RECIPES

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## Æbleskiver (Apple Doughnuts, Denmark)

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1 cup flour	3 egg yolks
1 tablespoon sugar	1-3/4 cups buttermilk
1/4 teaspoon coarse salt	Pinch of finely grated lemon zest
1 teaspoon baking soda	3 egg whites
2 teaspoons ground cardamom	3-1/2 tablespoons butter, melted

### Filling:

1 apple, finely chopped or pureed, prunes, or raisins

### Accompaniments:

Icing sugar and strawberry, raspberry, or black currant jam

1. Sift flour into a bowl and mix with sugar, salt, baking soda, and cardamom.
2. Beat egg yolks with buttermilk and grate lemon zest into the mixture. Add flour mixture gradually, until the batter is smooth. Let it rest for half an hour.
3. Beat egg whites in a separate bowl until stiff. Fold carefully into batter.
4. Heat *æbleskiver* pan on a medium-high stovetop burner. Pour one teaspoon melted butter into each hollow. Fill hollows with batter almost to the edge. Set pan on burner and cook until the edges begin to bubble.
5. Place one teaspoon filling in each one while center is still liquid. Turn the *æbleskiver* over with a fork or a wooden skewer, running it around the edge of each *æbleskiver*. Turn them as soon as they have formed a crust and are beautifully light brown. Turn the *æbleskiver* a couple of times, so they are evenly baked after six to eight minutes.
6. Remove from pan and keep warm in oven at 200 F, while baking the rest.
7. Eat with accompaniments, if desired.

Makes 25–30, enough for six servings.

### **Akasan (Corn Drink, Haiti)**

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(Adapted from Yurnet-Thomas, Mirta, *A Taste of Haiti*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 2002.)

4 cups water	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cinnamon sticks or 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon	2 (12 ounces) cans evaporated milk
3 star anise	1/4 cup sugar
1 cup corn flour	Salt to taste

1. Boil four cups of water in a deep pan, add the spices and salt and cook until spices are well softened and the water is fragrant.
2. Mix the corn flour well with one cup of *cold* water and a dash of salt.
3. Lower the heat and slowly pour the corn–water mixture into the boiling water, stirring constantly, until it becomes thick and smooth.
4. Add the vanilla extract and one can of evaporated milk. Let the mixture cool.
5. Remove the spices and add sugar and evaporated milk to taste.

### **Aloo Pie (Trinidad)**

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(Adapted from *The Multi-Cultural Cuisine of Trinidad and Tobago. The Naparma Girls' High School Cookbook*, updated and revised edition, San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago, 2002.)

1 cup white flour	Red chili pepper or hot pepper sauce to taste (optional)
1 teaspoon baking powder	1/2 teaspoon cumin powder
3/4 teaspoon salt	1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
1/2 cup water (approximately)	1 cup of vegetable oil
1/2 pound potatoes	
1/4 teaspoon black pepper	

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, and half of the salt, add water and knead lightly. Cover with damp cloth and set aside.
2. Boil potatoes in salted water until they are soft, peel, and mash.
3. Season the mashed potatoes with the rest of the salt, black, cumin, garlic, and the hot pepper or sauce if used.
4. Divide the dough into four balls and flatten each ball into a four-inch circle. (They can also be made smaller if you prefer.)

5. Place two tablespoons of the potato mixture on half of each round of dough, fold it over to form a crescent, and seal rims by using a little water, then pressing down with fingers or a fork.
6. Fry them one by one in hot oil for a few seconds, turn it over, and cook until it is golden brown.
7. Drain on paper towels.

Makes four large *aloo*.

### ***Arepas* (Venezuela)**

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- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 2 cups instant cornmeal (quick cooking) | 2 cups hot water               |
| 1 teaspoon salt                         | 2 tablespoons melted butter    |
|   | Olive or canola oil for frying |

1. Place cornmeal in a bowl, add water and melted butter, and stir with a large spoon until well blended.
2. Form about 15 equal-sized balls. Place balls on waxed paper or an oil surface (they will stick if placed on a nonsmooth surface). With a spatula, flatten each ball into a thick cake about three inches in circumference.
3. Meanwhile, heat one to two tablespoons of oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. When all are ready, place as many *arepas* as will fit in the pan. Sautee the *arepas* until they are crusty brown on the outside on one side. Flip each one and brown on the other side. Be careful not to burn them.
4. Cook all the *arepas* and set aside.
5. When ready to fill, split into half horizontally. Fill with cheese, meat, or vegetable filling and eat warm.

Makes 15.

### ***Ayran* (Yogurt Drink, Turkey)**

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- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 3 cups yogurt     | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 3 cups cold water |                 |

1. Place yogurt and salt into a bowl and stir until creamy, add water gradually to mix thoroughly.
2. Alternately, mix all in a blender at high speed until frothy.
3. Serve in tumblers. Some like to fizz it up with a little sparkling mineral water.

## Barbudos (Costa Rica)

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1/2 pound fresh green beans with ends snipped off	1 teaspoon salt
Water to cover	1/2 teaspoon ground chili powder, or to taste
2 eggs	6 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil for frying
2 tablespoons flour	

1. Snip green beans and set aside. Place water in deep pan, bring to boil. Add green beans and parboil for one to two minutes, or until slightly tender. Drain.
2. Place eggs in a bowl and beat until light. Beat in flour, salt, and ground chili powder.
3. Place beans in the egg mixture and coat them well.
4. Heat oil in deep, heavy skillet. When hot (325 F), place a few beans in the hot oil and fry until light golden brown. Drain on paper towels and keep warm. Do the same with the rest of the beans.

Serve warm.

Serves four.

## Beef Plov (Bukhara, Uzbekistan)

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(Adapted from Visson, Lynn, *The Art of Uzbek Cooking*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1998.)

1/2 cup vegetable oil	2-1/2 cups rice
3 large onions peeled and sliced	3 cups boiling water, approximately
1-1/2 pounds beef for stew cut into one-inch cubes	Salt and pepper to taste
6 carrots peeled and cut into thick strips	2 teaspoons cumin seeds
	1 head of garlic broken into several unpeeled cloves

1. Heat the oil in a large heavy casserole or Dutch oven.
2. Sauté the onions for four to five minutes over low heat and add the beef. Brown well on all sides stirring frequently for 10 or 12 minutes.
3. Layer the carrots on top of the meat and onion mixture but do not stir.
4. Put the rice on top of the carrots and carefully pour in the boiling water down the sides of the pot. It should come to one inch over the surface of the rice.
5. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and cumin and stir carefully so that the spices blend only with the rice and the meat and vegetables remain undisturbed.

6. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat to medium low, add garlic cloves, cover the pot, and simmer for 40 minutes until most of the water has evaporated. Check to be sure the mixture does not burn.
7. Let the water pot boil at fairly high heat until the water has evaporated, about 15–20 minutes.
8. Poke several holes in the rice with a wooden spoon to allow the water on the bottom of the pan to evaporate. Fluff up the rice layer without touching the vegetables or meat. Reduce the heat to very low, cover the pot tightly, and steam the plov until the rice is tender, about 20–30 minutes more.
9. Remove from the heat and let it stand for five minutes before serving. Put the rice on a large serving platter and mound the meat and vegetables over it.

Serves six.

### **Bindaetteok (Korean Savory Pancakes)**

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(Adapted from Chang SunYoung, *A Korean Mother's Cooking Notes*, Seoul: Ewha Womans University Press, 2009.)

1-1/2 cups skinned, yellow mung beans	1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 cup kimchi juice	Cooking oil
1/4 cup water	
3/4 cup chopped kimchi	<b>Dipping Sauce</b>
1/2 cup bean sprouts	1/2 cup soy sauce
3 green onions slivered, and cut into 3-inch pieces	1/4 cup rice vinegar
1 tablespoon minced garlic	1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon minced ginger	1/2 teaspoon gochucharu
1 tablespoon fish sauce	1/4 teaspoon sesame seeds
	1 chopped green onion

Soak the mung beans in water overnight. Place beans, kimchi, juice, water, garlic, ginger, fish sauce, and sesame oil in a blender. Pulse the ingredients until blended into a batter. Don't overblend: the batter should be coarse and a bit gritty. If it's too thick, add a bit more water. Turn batter into a large bowl and mix in kimchi, bean sprouts, and green onions. Drop batter in batches on a hot, oiled skillet. Fry on each side until browned and crispy. Place pancakes on a paper towel to absorb excess oil. Eat with the dipping sauce.

### **Black Beans (Guatemala)**

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1/2 pound dried black beans	1 bay leaf
1 small onion, chopped	4 cups chicken broth
1 clove garlic chopped	Salt to taste

1. Place dried beans in a deep pan with the rest of the ingredients.
2. Bring broth to boil, reduce heat, and cook beans slowly for about two hours, or until tender. Add salt to taste. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Serve with fresh tortillas, sour cream, a spicy salsa, as desired.

## **Black Pepper Crab (Singapore)**

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(Adapted from <http://rasamalaysia.com/recipe-black-pepper-crab/2/>)

Traditionally, this recipe is made with mud crabs, though you can substitute Dungeness.

3 crabs (approximately 1 pound each)	2 tablespoons dried prawns, roasted and ground
2 cups oil	2 tablespoons ground black pepper
2 tablespoons butter	10 red or green bird's-eye (Thai) chilies or <i>chiles arboles</i>
2 shallots, sliced thin	2 tablespoons black soy sauce
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped	3 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon salted soybeans, mashed	2 tablespoons oyster sauce

1. Cut crabs into half and smash the claws with a crab cracker or mallet.
2. Heat oil in a deep, heavy skillet or wok to about 350 F. Deep fry crabs one at a time until each is half-cooked; drain and set aside.
3. In a wok, heat butter until hot. Add shallots, garlic, salted soybeans, dried prawns, black pepper, and chilies, and sauté until shallots turn transparent.
4. Add crab, black soy sauce, sugar, and oyster sauce and cook for five minutes or until crabs are done.

Serves four.

## **Boiled Channa (Guyana)**

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2–3 tablespoon vegetable oil for frying	1 red bird chili, finely chopped (or substitute chili powder to taste)
1 medium white onion, cut into thin rings	1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 cans (15-16 ounces) chickpeas, rinsed and drained (or the same amount of freshly boiled chickpeas)	2 teaspoon ground coriander
	Salt to taste, if needed

1. Heat the oil in a wok or skillet.
2. Fry the onions until lightly browned.
3. Add the drained chickpeas and stir-fry briefly.
4. Add the chili and spices and continue to stir-fry for a minute or two.
5. Taste for salt and add some if needed. Canned chickpeas are usually salty enough.
6. Serve warm or at room temperature as a snack, with optional readymade West Indian pepper sauce if you like your food very spicy. (Mexican *habanero* sauce is also good.)

Serves four to six.

### ***Boulanee with a Potato Filling (Afghanistan)***

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1 pound sifted white plain flour (or half white, half <i>chapati</i> flour)	2 ounces green onions, finely chopped
1 cup water	1 teaspoon black pepper
3 teaspoons salt	1/4–1/2 cup vegetable oil for frying
2 pounds potatoes, boiled and mashed	

1. Put the flour and one teaspoon of salt into a mixing bowl. Add slowly as much water as required and mix to form a stiff dough. Place the dough on to a clean work surface and knead for about 5–10 minutes until the dough is elastic, smooth, and shiny. Form the dough into a ball, cover with a damp cloth and set aside for at least half an hour.
2. Peel and wash the potatoes and boil them in salted water until soft. Drain off the water and mash thoroughly. Mix in the green onions, salt, and black pepper.
3. Divide the dough into three or four balls. Roll out each ball as thinly as possible on a lightly floured surface (the thickness should be no more than 1/16 inches (1-1/2 mm—if the dough is too thick, the *boulanee* will be tough). Take a round cutter of five to six inches (13–15 cm) (a pan lid or tin lid can be used) and cut out as many rounds as possible. The number of *boulanee* will depend on how thinly the dough is rolled out and the size of cutter used.
4. On half of each round, spread about one to two tablespoons of the mashed potato mixture. Moisten the edges of the dough, fold over, and seal shut. The *boulanee* should be spread out on a lightly floured surface until ready to fry. Do not place one on top of another as they will stick together.
5. When all the *boulanee* are made and you are ready to serve them, heat enough vegetable oil in a frying pan and shallow fry one or two at a time over a medium to hot heat, browning on both sides. They are best served crisp and hot, straight from the frying pan but can be kept in a warm oven until all are finished.



Makes approximately 15.

Note: Wonton wrappers can be substituted although the size will be smaller.

### ***Buletten* (Fried Meat Patties, Germany)**

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1/4 pound ground pork	Salt and pepper to taste
1/4 pound ground beef	Pinch of nutmeg
1 egg	1/2 cup fine bread crumbs
1 medium onion, finely diced	2–4 tablespoons butter for frying
One half of a white roll, soaked in milk, squeezed dry, and torn into pieces	

1. Mix the meat with the onion, egg, and bread, and season.
2. Form into four semispherical patties, place bread crumbs in a place, and roll *buletten* in them until coated. Melt butter in heavy skillet and fry *buletten* in the butter until cooked through.

Serves four.

### ***Burek* (Balkans)**

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Preheat oven to 450 F.

#### **Basic Dough Recipe**

	1 teaspoon salt
2 pounds flour	Lukewarm water
1 cup vegetable oil (in Macedonia, pork lard is often used)	

Fillings: Fillings can include sautéed finely chopped meat and onions, feta cheese and spinach, sautéed potatoes with black pepper, sautéed leeks, cabbage, or mushrooms.

1. Place the flour in a large bowl, make a hole in the middle in which to put the salt and one tablespoon of the oil, add a bit of lukewarm water, and mix to make a hard dough. Knead on the dough for 5–10 minutes until it becomes compact and elastic. Cut it into six identical pieces, form each into a ball and douse each with a good measure of oil. Dust a pan or the working surface with some flour and leave the six dough balls on it to rest for approx. one hour.
2. Prepare the working space by placing a very large clean table cloth or kitchen towel on the table. Take one ball, flatten it on the cloth, then pull to form one very large flat sheet (it helps to have more people gently pull on each side).

If using a filling, spread it over the entire surface now. Then, gently lift one side of the cloth and roll the dough into one long thin roll. Repeat with the rest of the dough.

Alternatively, separate the dough into 10–12 balls, then roll each with a rolling pin until paper thin (until the dough allows it and does not break). Place on sheet on a floured work surface and fill each one with part of the fillings. Roll each into a snail shape.

3. Place the rolls in a spiral shape (snail)/layer the pie onto a preferably round, oiled, and flour-dusted baking pan/tray. Bake at 450 F for approx. 35 minutes or until crispy on the outside.

### **Burritos (United States)**

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(Adapted from <http://southernfood.about.com/od/groundbeefrecipes/r/bl31221e.htm>)

Preheat oven to 350 F.

1/2 medium onion, coarsely chopped	1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 clove garlic, mashed and finely chopped	Salt and pepper to taste
1 pound lean ground beef	1 can (16 ounces) refried beans
2 teaspoons chili powder	8–12 ounces jar Mexican chili sauce, red
	6 large flour tortillas

Optional: shredded Mexican cheese, sour cream, guacamole, chopped tomatoes, shredded lettuce.

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, sauté onion and garlic until transparent.
2. Add ground beef and cook until meat is browned, stirring often to break up the meat. Drain fat from pan.
3. Stir in chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper; simmer for 10 minutes. Add refried beans and half of the chili sauce. Heat thoroughly.
4. Lay out the tortillas on a board or plate. Place about 1/2 cup of the ground beef mixture onto each tortilla, roll up, and place seam-side down on a baking dish. Do the same for the rest of the tortillas.
5. Place in preheated oven and bake for 10 minutes. Remove and serve as is or with optional accompaniments.

Serves six.

### **Cassava Pone (Guyana)**

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Preheat oven to 350 F.

2 medium eggs	1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup granulated sugar	1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon salt	1/4 teaspoon finely ground black pepper (optional)
1-1/2 pounds finely grated cassava/ manioc (can be bought frozen, already grated)	4 tablespoons butter, melted
	12 fluid ounces coconut or dairy milk

1. Grease a deep nine-inch square glass dish or cake pan.
2. Beat the eggs with the sugar and salt until pale and slightly thickened.
3. Add the grated cassava/manioc and the other ingredients and mix thoroughly until smooth.
4. Scrape the batter out into the dish or pan and bake in preheated oven for about 1 to 1-1/4 hours until cooked through. The top should be golden brown in most places.
5. Allow to cool in the dish or pan and serve in squares. It is very dense, so keep portions small to start with.

Serves four to six.

### **Causas (Stuffed Potatoes, Peru)**

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(Adapted from [http://www.theperuguide.com/gastronomy/peruvian\\_cuisine\\_recipes/causa.html](http://www.theperuguide.com/gastronomy/peruvian_cuisine_recipes/causa.html) and <http://blog.cookingchanneltv.com/2011/07/01/peruvian-causa-recipe-with-tuna-avocado-and-tomato/>)

2 pound potatoes (yellow, if available)	1/2 onion, finely chopped
4 tablespoons <i>ají amarillo</i> paste (see the following text)	1 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup vegetable oil	1 avocado, cut into slices
Juice 1 key lime	Salt
1 can of tuna fish packed in oil*	Two hard-boiled eggs, sliced
	1/4 cup sliced black olives

1. Boil the potatoes in salted water. Peel and mash while warm. Let cool and mix thoroughly with the *ají amarillo* paste, vegetable oil, and lime juice. Salt to taste.
2. Mix the tuna with the chopped onions and mayonnaise.
3. Place a layer of the potato mash on a serving dish, and spread with a thin film of mayonnaise. Lay the avocado slices on top. Spread a second layer of potato mash and cover with the tuna mayonnaise. Cover with a final layer of potatoes and decorate with slices of hard-boiled eggs and black olives.

\*Instead of tuna, you can also use crabmeat, shrimps, octopus in olive oil, or plain tomato slices.

## Aji Amarillo Paste

1 pound fresh *ají* Amarillo chilies or 2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
dried red chilies if not available

1. Place the chilies in a saucepan with water and boil for five minutes. Change water and repeat the procedure twice.
2. Cut, seed, and devein the chilies. Place in bowl of a blender and process with the oil until it becomes a creamy paste, adding water as needed.

## Chapli Kebab (Afghanistan)

(Adapted from Ramzi, Shanaz, *Food Prints—Epicurean Voyage through Pakistan: An Overview of Pakistani Communities and Their Cuisine*, Karachi, Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2012.)

1 pound finely chopped lamb or beef	3–4 tablespoons fresh cilantro, finely chopped
12 ounces green onions, finely chopped	
4 ounces white flour	2 teaspoons ground coriander seed
1/2 sweet bell pepper (green or red), deseeded and finely chopped	Salt to taste
4 hot green chilies, deseeded and finely chopped (use less if a milder version is preferred)	1/2 cup vegetable oil for frying
	1/4 cup extra fresh cilantro for garnishing
	12 lemon wedges

1. Place the meat, green onions, flour, both kinds of pepper, fresh and ground cilantro, and salt to taste in a bowl and mix and knead thoroughly until the mixture is smooth and sticky. Shape the mixture into flat oblongs about 6 × 4 inches and 1/4 inch thickness.
2. Heat enough vegetable oil in a frying pan to fry the kebabs (which should be almost covered by the oil) and fry over a medium-to-high heat until they are brown on both sides and cooked through (about 10 minutes).

Serve with a tomato and onion salad and chapati or naan. Garnish with fresh cilantro and lemon wedges.

Makes 12.

## Chicken and Stuffing Sandwiches (Ireland)

Sliced cooked chicken breast	Butter
Sliced white pan (bread)	Mayonnaise

Stuffing (finely diced onions, herbs—parsley and thyme or sage—and breadcrumbs)

1. Spread two slices of white sliced bread with butter and mayonnaise. Arrange slices of cooked chicken on top. Top with parsley and thyme, or sage and onion stuffing. Cut in half on the diagonal and serve.
2. For stuffing, sweat finely diced onion in butter until soft. Add in the chopped herbs and breadcrumbs and mix well. Season with salt and pepper and cook out slowly until flavors combine.

### **Chicken Kiev (Ukraine)**

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4 chicken breast, about 1/2 lb each	1 teaspoon flat leaf parsley, finely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste	
1/4 pound (8 tablespoons) butter, softened	1 cup flour
1 teaspoon dill weed, finely chopped	2 eggs, beaten
	2 cups fine breadcrumbs
	Oil for frying

1. Lay out chicken breasts on a sheet of plastic wrap and gently pound with a meat mallet until fairly thin. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Place soft butter in a bowl and, with a fork or fingers, mix in the dill and parsley thoroughly.
3. Form the butter into a roll and place in freezer for about 10–20 minutes until hardened, but not frozen through.
4. When hardened, remove butter from freezer and divide into four equal-sized rolls.
5. Place each roll on the long side of each chicken breast. Push up the short sides toward the center, fold the long side of the breast over the butter, and roll up tightly. When all are done, place breasts in refrigerator for about an hour, until cold.
6. When ready to cook, heat about 1-1/2 to 2 inches of oil in a deep, heavy pan until 350 F.
7. Beat egg in a bowl and place flour on one plate, breadcrumbs on another. Roll chicken breast in flour, then in egg mixture, and then in breadcrumbs until well coated. Place in hot oil and fry for six to seven minutes until well browned. Make sure the chicken is cooked through.

When done, remove from pan and drain on paper towels.

Serves four.

Serve with sliced cucumbers or shredded pickled cabbage.

### ***Chimichurri (Argentina)***

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1/4 cup olive oil	1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes
1 large or 2 small cloves garlic minced	1 teaspoon salt
A good handful of flat, leaf parsley ripped from a healthy bunch, finely chopped	1/4 teaspoon pepper
	2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Mix the ingredients together and let the flavors combine for a couple of hours before serving.

### ***Congee (Hong Kong)***

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(Adapted from <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Chinese-Chicken-and-Rice-Porridge-Congee-103051>)

10 cups chicken stock	1 chicken breast, cooked and shredded
3 tablespoons medium-dry sherry	4 tablespoons of finely chopped ginger
3 slices of ginger, about 1/4-inch thick	4 tablespoons finely chopped green onions
3 green onions, just the white portion, cut the long way, and smashed with the flat of a knife	2 tablespoons sesame oil
1 cup long-grain rice	

1. Pour chicken stock in a large pan. Add sherry, ginger, and green onions. Bring to boil, reduce heat at once, and cook at a low simmer for 15 minutes.
2. Return liquid to boil and add rice, then reduce heat, simmer and stir frequently until rice is cooked, and mixture has the consistency of oatmeal. Stir occasionally for about two hours.
3. Let it stand about 30 minutes to thicken.
4. Top with chicken breast, chopped ginger, chopped green onions, and sesame oil; serve.

Serves four.

### ***Coriander and Fish Ball Noodle Soup (Hong Kong)***

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(Adapted from <http://www.taste.com.au/recipes/19127/coriander+fish+ball+noodle+soup>)

6 cups chicken stock	1/2 cup cilantro, chopped
1 one-inch chunk of fresh ginger, peeled, sliced	1 teaspoon finely grated lime rind
2 star anise	1 garlic clove, crushed
2 tablespoons soy sauce	1/2 pound pad Thai noodles
2 teaspoons brown sugar	4 ounces snow peas, trimmed, finely sliced
1-1/2 pounds boneless white fish fillet, skin removed, roughly chopped	Fresh cilantro for garnish

1. In a large pan, bring stock, ginger, star anise, soy sauce, and sugar to boil over high heat, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes.
2. Place fish, cilantro, lime rind, and garlic in bowl of a food processor. Season with salt and pepper. Process until combined.
3. When done, remove fish mixture from the processor and shape tablespoons of fish mixture into balls.
4. In a large lidded pan, cover noodles with boiling water and let stand until tender (five to seven minutes). Separate noodles with fork and drain.
5. Strain stock and return to pan over medium heat.
6. Add fish balls to stock and cook, stirring, for 8–10 minutes.
7. Add snow peas and cook until tender (about one minute).
8. Divide noodles between bowls and ladle soup over noodles. Top with cilantro; serve.

Serves four.

### **Corn Dogs (United States)**

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Heat oil for deep frying, at 375 F.

1-1/3 cups cornmeal	1/2 cup milk
2/3 cup flour	1 egg, lightly beaten
1 tablespoon sugar	1 tablespoon melted shortening
1 teaspoon dry mustard	6 frankfurters
1 teaspoon baking powder	6 skewers or sticks
Salt to taste	

1. In a large bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, sugar, mustard, baking powder, and salt. Mix well.
2. Add the milk, egg, and shortening, mixing until very smooth. Pour the mixture into a tall glass.

3. Put the frankfurters on sticks. Dip them into the cornmeal batter to coat them evenly.
4. Deep fry in oil heated to 375 F until golden brown, about two minutes. Drain on paper towels.

Makes six.

## Corn Soup (Trinidad)

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(Courtesy of Peggy Mohan)

2 ears of fresh corn	Water for boiling dal, about 2 cups
1/2 cup yellow dal (lentils), uncooked (or a cup of leftover cooked dal)	1 cup ripe pumpkin, peeled and cut in cubes
1–2 cups root vegetables, cut small (yam, cassava, taro, sweet potato, green banana)	1/2 teaspoon thyme
1/2 cup diced carrot	1–12 ounces can coconut milk (Olive oil to drizzle on top— optional)
Salt (to taste)	Chopped cilantro/coriander leaves or <i>chadon-béni</i> /culantro, if you have it
Celery salt (to taste)	
1–2 teaspoons hot chili sauce (or to taste)	

1. Boil the ears of corn in unsalted water. Cut into round chunks with a chopping knife.
2. Place dal in a deep pan and cover the dal with water. When it is soft, add pumpkin, root vegetables, and carrot, salt, thyme, and hot chili sauce. Cook till soft but not disintegrated. The vegetables should hold their shapes. Add the chunks of corn and coconut milk and simmer. Make sure that the soup is not too thick. If it is, add water.

Drizzle the olive oil on top. Sprinkle with the chopped coriander leaves/*chadon-béni*.

## Crepes (France)

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1 cup flour	3 eggs
1 teaspoon of white sugar	2 cups of milk
1/4 teaspoon salt	2 tablespoons butter, melted



1. In a large bowl, sift together flour, sugar, and salt; set aside.
2. In a separate large bowl, beat eggs and milk together with an electric mixer until smooth and slightly frothy.
3. Beat in flour mixture until smooth.
4. Stir in melted butter.
5. Heat a lightly oiled six- to eight-inch skillet or crepe pan over medium high heat.
6. Pour or scoop the batter onto the pan, using approximately two tablespoons for each crepe.

Tip and rotate stove to spread batter as thinly as possible. Brown on both sides, remove to a plate and fill or top as desired. Serve hot.

Makes six.

### ***Dakkochi* (Korean Chicken)**

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8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs	4 tablespoons gochucharu (red pepper powder)
<b>Marinade</b>	4 tablespoons soy sauce
4 tablespoons soy sauce	4 tablespoons soju (Korean wine)
4 tablespoons soju (Korean wine)	2 tablespoons sesame oil
<b>Sauce</b>	2 tablespoons grated ginger
6 tablespoons gochujang (red pepper paste)	2 tablespoons honey
	1 cup diced Asian pear

Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces and cover with marinade for at least one hour. Combine all the sauce ingredients in a blender and pulse until blended. Thread the chicken pieces onto soaked wooden skewers and grill until just cooked. Remove from the heat and, using a brush, apply the sauce to the chicken. Allow the chicken to stand at least 10 minutes. Place on heated grill and cook until the chicken is lightly charred, but cooked through.

### ***Felafel* (Israel)**

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(Adapted from <http://dinersjournal.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/12/recipe-of-the-day-falafel/>)

1 cup dried chickpeas, or	1 clove garlic, lightly crushed
1–16 ounces can chickpeas	1 medium onion, chopped
(garbanzo beans)	1 teaspoon ground coriander

- |                                      |                                  |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 teaspoon ground cumin              | 1/2 teaspoon black pepper        |
| 1-1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper powder | Juice of 1 whole lemon, squeezed |
| 1/2 cup chopped parsley leaves       | Canola or corn oil for frying    |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt                    |                                  |

1. If using dried chickpeas, put them in a large bowl and cover with water. Soak for 24 hours, adding water if needed. Chickpeas will swell to triple their original size. Drain chickpeas. Place in a deep pot and cover with water. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and cook for about one hour. Remove chickpeas from pan, drain, and allow to cool. Reserve some of the cooking water.
2. Place chickpeas in the bowl of a food processor. Add remaining ingredients except oil. Pulse until finely chopped but not pureed, scraping sides of bowl down. Add soaking water if necessary to allow mixture to form a ball—do not make a mushy paste.
3. Place about two inches of oil in a large, deep saucepan to a depth of at least two inches. Heat oil to about 350 F.
4. Form tablespoons of batter into the shape of balls or small patties. Fry in batches until browned, turning as necessary. Cooking time will be five minutes. Serve hot in pitta bread with chopped cucumbers and tomatoes, and humus dip.

Serves four.

### ***Fiadu* (with Pineapple and Pineapple Syrup, Suriname)**

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*Fiadu* is made of strips of yeast dough filled with butter, cinnamon, and sugar, almonds, raisins, and stewed pineapple.

Preheat oven to 375 F.

#### **Dough**

- 1 pound all-purpose white flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 package dry yeast
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 8 ounces (1 cup) milk

#### **Filling**

- 8 ounces raisins
- 3-1/2 ounces of candied peel

- 3 ounces toasted almonds
- Stewed pineapple (see the following text)
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted

#### **Stewed Pineapple**

- 2- to 12-ounce cans pineapple, drained
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- Juice of 1 lemon

1. Pour the pineapple in a colander, collect the liquid.
2. Put the pineapple slices in a saucepan, add two tablespoons sugar and the lemon juice. Leave it on low heat to simmer about 30 minutes until the liquid has evaporated.
3. Chop the pineapple on a board with a large kitchen knife into small pieces.

### **Dough**

1. Melt four tablespoons of butter in a glass bowl in the microwave until melted (about one minute). Stir in the sugar, eggs, and milk and mix well.
2. Place flour in a large bowl of a mixer fitted with a dough hook. Stir in the salt first and then the yeast in the wheat flour. Turn on the mixer, and little by little, add the egg mixture to make a cohesive dough.
3. When a soft dough is formed, remove the bowl from the mixer and place in a plastic bag. Allow or rise for 1 to 1-1/2 hours.

### **Filling**

1. Put the raisins in a colander and rinse under cold running water.
2. Put raisins in a small bowl, pour over boiling water, and leave (to soak) for about 15 minutes.
3. Drain the raisins and dry with paper towels. Mix with the stewed pineapple, raisins, and almonds.

Mix the sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl and put aside.

### **To Assemble**

1. Have ready a 10 × 8-inch baking sheet or similar-sized baking pan. Coat with melted butter.
2. Sprinkle a thin layer of flour on work surface, place the dough on top, and sprinkle a (small) bit of flour over the dough. Roll out the dough with a rolling pin into a rectangle of about 10 × 18 inches.
3. Brush the dough with a generous layer of butter and sprinkle it with the mixture of sugar and cinnamon—about an inch from the edges. Spread the filling on the dough. Roll the dough starting from the small side.
4. Cut the dough into slices (strips) of circa one inch. Put the slices in the baking pan. Brush the top with a brush with remaining butter. Put the baking pan slightly above the center of the oven.

Bake for about 25 minutes.

### Pineapple Syrup

2 fresh pineapples (3 pounds)  
2 pounds sugar (4 cups)

Juice of 1 lime or lemon  
1 tablespoon citric acid (powder)

1. Clean the pineapples and cut the flesh into small pieces.
2. Put them in a pot with one liter (four cups) of water. Bring to a boil and let the pineapple water simmer for about 30 minutes.
3. Pour the pineapple in a colander, collect the liquid.
4. Measure the liquid and add two cups of sugar for every three cups of pineapple water, add the lime juice. Bring to a boil and cook for five minutes. Stir in the citric acid. Pour the hot syrup in clean bottles and store in refrigerator.

### Fish and Chips (Great Britain)

Have ready a deep fat fryer with 2 cups of oil heated to 335 F

2 cups, or more, vegetable oil for deep frying  
4 ounces (1/2 cup) flour  
Pinch of salt  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 cup milk

1 cup water  
About 2 pounds large potatoes  
4 fillets of cod or haddock, weighing about 8 ounces each  
Malt vinegar  
Salt to taste

1. Begin to heat the oil in a fryer.
2. Put the flour and salt in a bowl and mix in the beaten eggs. Gradually add the milk and water until the mixture resembles thin cream. Set aside and allow to stand for a few hours.
3. At the same time, peel the potatoes and cut them into strips, 1/2-inch long by 3/4-inch wide. Use a deep fat fryer and heat the oil 335 F. Place potato strips in a basket and blanch them—by frying until they are tender but still pale. Do not brown them. Remove the basket from the oil, drain, and allow to cool. A refrigerator is best for this.
4. When ready to eat, reheat the oil or fat to 365 F. Dip the fish in the batter, place in frying basket, and carefully lower into the hot fat. Fry until crisp and golden brown. Drain.
5. Then fry the blanched chips for a few minutes until crisp and brown. Drain.

Sprinkle each portion with salt and malt vinegar, then wrap in greaseproof paper followed by newspaper.

Serves four.

### ***Fiskekaker* (Fish Cakes, Norway)**

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1 pound fillet of haddock, cod, or other white fish	A pinch of nutmeg
1 egg	Salt and white pepper to taste
1 cup milk	Fresh chopped chives
2 tablespoons potato flour	Butter for frying

1. Cut the fillets into small pieces and place in the bowl of a food processor. Add flour, egg, salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Process until smooth. Add milk gradually while processing. Add the chopped chives.
2. Using a large spoon, form cakes from the batter.
3. Heat several tablespoons of butter in a heavy skillet. Fry each fish cake in butter on both sides until light golden brown. Allow to cool. Serve warm or cold.

Can be served as a meal with steamed vegetables, boiled potatoes, and browned butter.

Makes six.

### ***Focaccia* (Bari, Italy)**

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(Modified version of recipe in Viktorija Todorovska, *The Puglian Cookbook: Bringing the Flavors of Puglia Home*)

Preheat the oven to 400 F

16 ounces all-purpose flour	<b>Toppings</b>
4 ounces semolina (durum wheat flour)	One 14-ounce can of tomatoes
1 package dry yeast	2–3 teaspoons dried oregano
2 teaspoons sugar	2 tablespoons capers
2 teaspoons salt	1/2 green or black olives (optional, but highly recommended)
2 cups warm water (105–110 F)	
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil	

1. In a large bowl, combine the flour, yeast, sugar, and salt, and mix well. Slowly add the water and start mixing with your hands, breaking up any lumps. When the dough is smooth (it should be almost runny), cover it with a towel (and a warm blanket if the room is cool), and let it rise for 1-1/2 hours in a warm spot. The dough should double in size and have bubbles at the end of the rising. If you want a thicker focaccia, let the dough rise for an additional 1/2 hour.

2. Prepare three 9-inch baking dishes or one 17 × 13-inch cookie sheet. Spread the olive oil on the bottom and sides of the pan(s), leaving no dry spots.
3. Spoon the focaccia dough into the pan and spread evenly. Spread the canned tomatoes on the surface of the dough, sprinkle with oregano and capers (and olives, if desired). Sprinkle with sea salt and drizzle with a little olive oil.
4. Bake in preheated oven for 45 minutes.

Serves 12–16.

### **Fried Chicken Strips (African American)**

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(Adapted from a recipe by Robinson, Sallie Ann, *Cooking the Gullah Way, Morning, Noon, and Night*, Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.)

2 pounds boneless chicken breast strips	1-1/2 cups flour
1-1/2 teaspoon paprika	1–2 eggs, beaten
1 teaspoon salt	1/2 cup milk
1 teaspoon pepper	2 cups vegetable oil

1. Place chicken in a large bowl. Season raw chicken strips with paprika, pepper, and salt.
2. Flour the chicken by placing it in a bag (paper or plastic) with half of the flour and shaking to coat.
3. Beat eggs in a bowl. Remove chicken strips from bag. Dip floured chicken strips into egg. Remove and place strips in flour again. Remove the chicken pieces from the bag and shake off extra flour.
4. Let the chicken strips rest for several minutes so that the coating may adhere.
5. Heat the oil in a deep skillet.
6. Test the oil temperature by dropping in a dab of flour, which should brown, not burn. Add the chicken to the oil.
7. Cook thoroughly for about four minutes, turning occasionally, until golden brown on all sides. Remove, drain on a wire rack, and serve hot.

Serves 10–12.

### **Frieten Met Mayonnaise (Belgium)**

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Making fries is simple, but if you want them perfect, they need a little extra work. It all starts with the choice of potatoes. Some are too soft to fry, or turn dark. You can best use “bintjes” or “Nicolas.” In the North America, Burbank Russets are

the most widely used. Also important is your choice of oil. Even though health specialists will say it is better to use vegetable oil, the perfect fries are baked in beef fat.

Have ready a fryer pan with at least 1 cup of oil heated to 320 F.

3 lbs potatoes

Beef fat for frying

1. Peel the potatoes and make sure all dark spots are removed.
2. Rinse using cold water.
3. Cut them in wedges of 1/2 inch.
4. Dry them using a kitchen towel (or lots of kitchen paper).
5. Heat the oil to 320 F.
6. Place potatoes in fryer basket. Lower them into the oil in batches for five minutes.
7. Remove from oil and put them on some kitchen paper and let them rest for about 30 minutes (most of the oil will be absorbed by the paper).
9. Meanwhile reheat the oil to 360 F and add more oil if necessary.
10. Place potatoes in the basket and fry them again until crisp and golden (only one to two minutes).
11. Let them drain again on paper towels or in a wire mesh strainer before serving.
12. Serve with salt and mayonnaise.

To make your own mayonnaise, whisk two egg yolks and add 1/2 teaspoon vinegar, 1/2 teaspoon mustard, and 1/2 teaspoon water. While whisking slowly (very slowly), add 1/2 cup vegetable oil until you get a thick pale sauce. Season with pepper and salt. If the sauce gets too thick, add some vinegar, water, or even lemon juice.

Serves four.

### **Fujianese Oyster Omelet (*Hao Zai Ping*)**

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This is one of the best known of Fujianese street foods. Traditionally, the oysters used are tiny tropical oysters. Gulf Coast oysters would be ideal if you can find them. If you use bigger oysters, cut into smaller pieces. The pan should be intensely hot for the sweet potato slurry to form a crisp golden skin to bind with the eggs. The omelet is not served whole but is broken up and stirred around toward the end.

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|---|---|
| 1 dozen small oysters, shucked, about<br>10–12 ounces | 1/4 cup water<br>Finely chopped cilantro and green onions |
| 2 beaten eggs   | Salt, pepper  |
| 2 tablespoon sweet potato flour                       | 2 tablespoons lard or oil for frying                      |

1. In a large bowl, make a thin batter with the sweet potato flour and water. Make sure flour is completely dissolved.
2. Heat pan to smoking. Coat surface of pan with lard or oil.
3. Pour in sweet potato batter. When it is almost fully set but still wet on top, pour in eggs beaten with salt and pepper.
4. When underside of starch-crust ed omelet is golden and beaten egg is halfway set, break the omelet into pieces with a spatula. Push them to one side.
5. Add oysters, green onions, and cilantro and stir-fry for 1/2 min. Fold and toss with egg.

Serve with hot sauce or the sweet chili sauce (*tian la jiang*) of your choice.

Serves two.

### ***Ful Meddames (Mashed Fava Beans, Egypt)***

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(Adapted from the food blog *My Life in a Pyramid* by Heba Saleh, <http://mylifeinapyramid.com/2010/04/beans-for-breakfast-fava-beans-egyptian-ful-meddames/>)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 pound dried fava beans, soaked<br>overnight | Juice from 2 large Persian limes                      |
| 1 tablespoon raw apple cider<br>vinegar       | Extra-virgin olive oil, salt, and pepper,<br>to taste |
| 3 tablespoons of tahini                       | 1 large fresh tomato, finely chopped                  |
| 6 cloves garlic, minced                       | 1 cucumber, peeled and diced                          |
| 1 tablespoon cumin powder                     | 3–4 green onions, chopped                             |
| 1 tablespoon ground coriander seed            | Bunch of parsley, chopped                             |

1. Soak one pound of dried fava beans overnight in warm water with a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar.
2. After soaking, discard the water and rinse the beans well. Add the beans to a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil, then cook on low–medium heat for 4–5 hours in a regular stove top, or 1.5 hours in a pressure cooker.



3. If using a regular stove pot, check the water level every few hours, adding hot water when the water runs low due to evaporation. When the skin around the bean has become soft enough to chew, the beans are well cooked.
4. Remove from heat. Finely chop six cloves of garlic and add to the beans.
5. Add three tablespoons of tahini and stir well. Add the cumin, coriander, salt, pepper, olive oil, lime juice, and mix. Use an immersion blender to blend beans with seasonings.
6. For the accompanying salad, dice the tomato into cubes, and chop the cucumber, green onions, and parsley.
7. Serve the mashed beans hot in a bowl, topped with chopped salad, and alongside warm, toasted pita bread.

Serves four to six.

### **Ginger Drink (West Africa)**

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3 cups boiling water	2 cinnamon sticks
1/2 cup peeled and grated fresh ginger root	1/4 cup lime juice
1/2 cup agave nectar	4 cups water
1 teaspoon whole cloves	

1. Place ginger, agave, cloves, and cinnamon in a container. Pour boiling water over the spices and let steep for at least one hour.
2. Add the lime juice and water. Stir and allow the mixture to sit for at least another hour. Strain the brew and store in a glass container in the refrigerator.

Serves six to eight.

### **Green Papaya Salad (Thailand)**

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(Adapted from <http://thaifood.about.com/od/thaisnacks/r/PapayaSalad.htm>)

1/2 teaspoon shrimp paste	1 tablespoon sugar
2 tablespoons vegetable oil	1/8 teaspoon chili flakes
2 tablespoons fish sauce	1 small green papaya, grated
3 tablespoons lime juice	2 cups bean sprouts

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| 1–2 tomatoes, cut into thin wedges or long strips      | 1/2 cup fresh basil, chopped |
| 3 green onions, cut into long strips                   | 1/2 cup roasted peanuts      |
| 1 cup blanched green beans                             | Two sprigs of fresh cilantro |
| Red chili (for instance, bird’s eye), seeded, to taste |                              |

1. In a large bowl, stir together shrimp paste, vegetable oil, fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, and chili flakes.
2. Combine papaya, bean sprouts, tomatoes, onion, green beans, chili, and most of the basil in the bowl with the dressing. Toss well.
3. Add nuts and toss again.
4. Dress with cilantro and remaining basil and serve immediately.

Serves two.

## **Griddled Green Onion Flatbread** **(*Cong You Ping*, China)**

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This is the simplest and most basic method among many for this beloved street food. This recipe uses lard, which is traditional, but you can substitute with fragrant sesame oil instead. Brushing the surface with lard or oil before rolling and folding is what keeps the layers separate and creates the flaky texture. You can also substitute green onions with garlic chives (*jiu cai*) to make *jiu cai you ping*.

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 cup flour                     | 3 green onions, chopped (use only green part) |
| 1/2 cup boiling water           | Extra flour for rolling dough                 |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt               | Lard or vegetable oil for frying              |
| 2 tablespoon lard or sesame oil |   |

1. Mix flour and boiling water together till a wet dough forms. Knead well. Let dough sit for 30 minutes.
2. Sprinkle work surface with flour. Roll dough into a log and divide into two equal balls.
3. Roll out each ball of dough into a flat circle. Brush the surface of the circle with oil.
4. Roll the circle as you would a carpet. Twist this tube into a coil or the form of a snail.
5. Flatten gently with a roller. Brush surface again with oil or lard.
6. Sprinkle with green onions and season with salt.

7. Roll once again as earlier, first like a carpet, then into a coil. Flatten again gently and roll into a seven-inch circle.
8. Griddle fry both sides in lard or vegetable oil till golden. Repeat with second ball of dough. Slice into wedges to serve.

Serves four.

### ***Gughni* (Savory Chickpeas, Eastern India)**

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1/2 pound fresh chickpeas	1 tablespoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons grated coconut	Juice of 2 limes
1 teaspoon sugar	Salt to taste
2 tablespoons ghee (clarified butter)	

1. Soak the chickpeas overnight in enough water to cover.
2. Drain the chickpeas, place a deep pan, and cover with water. Add the ginger, coconut, and salt. Bring water to boil, reduce heat to simmer, and cook until the water dries up and the chickpeas are soft but not mushy.
3. Heat the ghee in a large pan, add the chickpeas, and sauté, stirring frequently.
4. Add the black pepper and cook for five minutes. Add the lime juice, mix well, and serve.

Serve with puris.

Serves four to six.

### **Hainan Chicken (Singapore)**

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(Adapted from <http://steamykitchen.com/5068-hainanese-chicken-rice.html>)

This recipe has three separate components: chicken, rice, chili sauce, and garnish.

#### **Chicken**

1 chicken (3–4 pounds)  
 Kosher salt  
 4 slices of ginger, about 4 inches long and 1/4 inches thick  
 2 green onions cut into 1-inch sections  
 1 teaspoon sesame oil  
 Water to cover

#### **Rice**

2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
 2 tablespoons finely chopped ginger  
 3 cups long-grain rice  
 2 cups chicken broth  
 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil  
 1 teaspoon kosher salt

### Chili Sauce

- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 2 tablespoons chicken broth
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 4 tablespoons chili sauce

- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 piece of ginger, about an inch long

### Garnish

- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 1 cucumber cut into bite-sized pieces
- 3 sprigs cilantro

1. Rub chicken, inside and out, with kosher salt and stuff with ginger and onion.
2. Place chicken in a large stock pot and fill with cold water to cover; bring to a boil then reduce to simmer and cook for about 60 minutes or until done.
3. Transfer chicken to ice bath to cool; discard ginger and green onion; reserve broth.
4. Heat vegetable oil over medium heat; when oil is hot, add garlic and ginger.
5. Add rice and stir to coat; cook for two minutes, then mix in sesame oil.
6. Add broth and salt and bring to a boil; immediately turn down heat and cook for 15 minutes and then remove from heat and let stand, with lid on, for 10 minutes.
7. Remove chicken from ice bath and rub outside with sesame oil; carve into desired pieces.
8. Blend chili sauce ingredients until smooth.
9. Warm up the broth and season to taste.
10. Serve chicken on rice with chili sauce, soy sauce, and cucumber, garnished with cilantro.

Serves four to six.

### ***Haleem* (Wheat and Meat Porridge, Iran)**

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|---|-----------------------------|
| 1 pound of lamb's shoulder and back             | 2 medium onions             |
| 2 ounces dried chickpeas                        | 3 tablespoons vegetable oil |
| 4 ounces dried wheat grains (red wheat is good) | 1/2 teaspoon turmeric       |

Garnish: Icing sugar, cinnamon powder, and melted butter to taste

1. Wash and rinse the wheat and chickpeas separately and soak them in cold water overnight.

2. The next day, skin the peas and the wheat.
3. Wash and dry the meat and cut into chunks.
4. Peel and cut the onions into six chunks.

### Cooking

1. Heat the oil in a medium size pan and fry the onions until translucent.
2. Mix in the turmeric and add the meat chunks. Stir well to seal the meat on all sides.
3. Drain and add the chickpeas to the meat and mix well. Pour one pint of water or stock in the pot and bring to boil. Season to taste.
4. Reduce the heat and let simmer until the meat is nearly cooked. Sieve and add the wheat to the mix and let simmer until all the ingredients are thoroughly cooked. Add water as necessary and stir frequently during cooking.
5. Once cooked, pour the mixture into a pot and pound with the flat end of a steak tenderizer until the meat is shredded and a sticky porridge-like consistency is achieved. If the mixture is looser than the porridge, pour it back into the pan and return to low heat. Stir continuously until thicker and add icing sugar to taste.
6. Pour into individual bowls. Garnish with a sprinkling of cinnamon and icing sugar and a knob of butter before serving.

Serves four.

### ***Hushuur* (Fried Meat-Filled Pastries, Mongolia)**

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These pastries, which are really an extension of the Mongolian penchant for meat-filled dumplings, are as comfortable in homes as they are at picnics or as street food.

#### **Dough**

2-1/4 cups flour  
1/4 teaspoons salt  
About 1 cup water

1-1/2 teaspoons salt  
1/4 teaspoons ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoons marjoram  
1/2 onion, finely chopped  
1–2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

#### **Filling**

1 lb chopped or ground fatty beef or mutton

1/2 cup oil for frying (mutton fat is traditional, but cooking oil works)

1. In a large bowl, combine flour and salt.
2. Add half a cup of water to the flour and then continue to add water a little at a time, mixing it thoroughly, until you have a rough, dry dough, about the texture

of that for pie crust. Knead until dough is smooth and elastic. Cover and let rest for 5–10 minutes.

3. In a separate bowl, combine meat, salt, black pepper, marjoram, chopped onion, and chopped garlic. Mix thoroughly. If dry, add a few drops of water to moisten.
4. Divide the dough into quarters. Roll each quarter into a cylinder and cut in half. Roll each half cylinder into a circle about five to six inches across.
5. Place about 2 to 2-1/2 tablespoons of the filling on one side of the circle, leaving space around the outside edge. Fold the other side over, creating a half-moon. Pinch the edges closed, squeezing out air and flattening the filling as you work. Repeat the process with the rest of the filling and dough pieces.
6. Pour oil into a frying pan, to a depth of about 1/2 an inch. Heat oil until hot. Fry two or three pastries at a time for two minutes per side, until they are golden brown and the meat is cooked. The *hushuur* can be eaten hot or cold.

Makes eight pastries.

### **Irio (Kenya)**

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2 pound potatoes, chopped	1 large chopped onion
16 ounces green peas, fresh or frozen	8 ounces cooked black-eyed peas or other beans
16 ounces corn kernels, fresh or frozen	1 teaspoon salt
8 ounces kale, Swiss chard, or spinach	

1. Place potatoes in enough water to cover. Bring to boil and cook for about 20 minutes, until the potatoes become somewhat soft.
2. Add the corn, kale, and onion. Add salt. Return to boil, reduce heat, and simmer until potatoes are cooked through, about 20 minutes.
3. Drain whatever water is left and simmer gently until tender (about 30 minutes).
4. Once all the ingredients are cooked through, mash them with a potato masher in the pan. Adjust salt to taste.

Note: A pinch of hot pepper flakes can be added to make a spicy mixture.

Serves four.

### ***Izgara Kimyonlu Köfte* (Meatballs with Cumin, Turkey)**

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1-1/4 pounds medium-fat finely chopped or ground meat (preferably lamb or a mixture of lamb and beef)

2–3 slices stale white bread	2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 large onion, finely grated	1 teaspoon salt
1 egg, beaten	1/2 teaspoon black pepper
2 cloves garlic, crushed	1 tablespoon olive oil

1. Place the chopped meat in a large bowl.
2. Discard the crust of the bread, soak the bread in water, and squeeze dry in your hands. Crumble the bread into minced meat.
3. Add egg, garlic, cumin, salt, and pepper and knead until well blended like a dough.
4. Take walnut-sized pieces, shape into round balls or into ovals, and flatten lightly.
5. Brush meatballs lightly with olive oil. Grill or fry in a nonstick pan on both sides until brown.

Serve with rice. You can grill halved tomatoes and long green peppers to serve with the meatballs.

### **Joojeh Kabab (Chicken Kabobs, Iran)**

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20 chicken thighs, boneless	Salt and pepper to taste
2 lemons	1 tablespoon vegetable oil
2 medium onions	Pinch of saffron (optional)
2 tablespoons butter	

1. Wash and skin the chicken kebabs and dry on a piece of kitchen towel. Gently score the flash to allow the marinade to penetrate deeper.
2. Peel and grate the onions. Squeeze out as much of the juice as possible and discard.
3. Juice the lemons.
4. (Optional) Using a pestle and mortar, grind the saffron with 1/2 teaspoon of granulated sugar to a powder. Transfer the saffron into a cup and add 1/4 cup of boiling water. Cover the cup with a saucer and leave to one side.

### **Marinade**

Put the chicken pieces in a shallow bowl and pour the grated onions over them. Add one tablespoon of the lemon juice, the vegetable oil, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix to ensure that the chicken pieces are well covered with the marinade. Cover the dish with cling film and leave for at least a couple of hour.

## Cooking

1. Heat a grill until it is as hot as possible.
2. Place five chicken pieces from the marinade mix onto a flat metal skewer. Repeat until all the pieces are used up.
3. Melt the butter and keep it aside. Put the skewers on the barbecue and brush with the butter and lemon juice. If you are using saffron, brush some skewers with saffron and some with lemon juice.
4. Turn to ensure that both sides are grilled nicely. Serve on a bed of plain rice or a piece of fresh bread.

Serves four to six.

## **Kabiraj (Chicken) Cutlet (India)**

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5 green chilies	1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 small onion	10 half chicken breasts or five full breasts
Juice of 1 lime	3 eggs
1 tablespoon ginger paste (available in Indian food stores)	2 tablespoons flour
1 teaspoon ground cumin	2 teaspoons fine breadcrumbs
1 teaspoon ground coriander	Oil for shallow frying
2 teaspoons salt	

1. Grind the onion, chilies, and lime juice to make a paste.
2. Mix the ground paste with the ginger paste, ground spices, and 1 teaspoon salt
3. Coat the chicken breasts with the spice paste. Cover the bowl and marinate in the refrigerator for at least two hours.
4. Beat the eggs well, dip the chicken breasts in the egg mixture, then in the flour and finally in the breadcrumbs.
5. In a deep, heavy skillet, heat the oil till smoking. Coat the chicken with the batter, place in the oil, lower the heat to medium, and cook until chicken is done, about 15 minutes.

Serves four to six.

## **Kaiserschmarrn (Dessert Dumplings, Austria)**

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(Adapted from <http://www.visit-salzburg.net/dining/desserts.htm>)



3 eggs, separated	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup flour	4 ounces milk
1 teaspoon sugar	1/4 cup butter
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract	1/4 cup raisins

1. Separate eggs into two bowls. Beat egg yolks until smooth. Stir in flour, sugar, vanilla extract, salt, and milk and form a batter.
2. Whisk the egg whites until stiff. Carefully fold the whites into the batter.
3. Melt the butter in a frying pan and pour into the batter.
4. Sprinkle some raisins over batter and fry it on low heat.
5. When set, remove “omelet” from pan and cut into six smaller pieces. Heat more butter in the pan, add the six pieces, and fry until golden brown.
6. Remove *Kaiserschmarrn* from pan and serve with powdered sugar and apple sauce or *Zwetschkenröster* (plum sauce).

Makes six.

### ***Karantita Algérienne* (Chickpea Pie, Algeria)**

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(Adapted from the food blog *MidEATS* by Heba Saleh. <http://mideats.com/2012/04/perfect-gluten-free-vegetarian-pizza-sumac-and-rosemary-karantita-socca-made-with-chickpea-flour/>)

2 cups chickpea flour (also known as garbanzo bean flour, garam flour, besan), soaked overnight in water (amount as per the following text), and a tablespoon of raw apple cider vinegar

1-1/2 cups filtered water	1/4 teaspoon black pepper
3–4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or ghee, divided	3/4 teaspoon smoked chipotle chili pepper powder (optional—use only if you like a spicy taste), harissa sauce (for those who like it a little hot and spicy)
2 tablespoons fresh rosemary, chopped	
1 teaspoon dried sumac	
2 teaspoons salt	

1. Soak the chickpea flour overnight. In a bowl, add 2 cups of chickpea flour, 1-1/2 cups of filtered water, and two tablespoons raw apple cider vinegar. Whisk together until there are no lumps. Cover and leave batter overnight on the counter.
2. Spice up the batter. The next day, you’ll have a batter that is ready to use! Add 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil or ghee, 2 tablespoons fresh finely chopped rosemary, 1 teaspoon dried sumac, 2 teaspoons unrefined salt, 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, and if you want a little kick, 3/4 teaspoon chili pepper powder.

3. Oil the pan. Add two to three tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil or ghee to a 12- or 14-inch cast-iron or nonstick pan, make sure the bottom and sides are oiled, then pour in the spiced chickpea batter. You can pour in a little at a time if you want a thinner crust or pour it all in and get a thick crust. With this amount of batter, you will likely have a 1/3-inch thickness.
4. Cook the karantita. Turn the heat on medium, and after three to four minutes, you'll notice bubbles forming. Keep the heat at medium-low and cover if splashing (it shouldn't be splashing a lot—if it is, you need to lower the heat). Cook on one side for seven to eight minutes or until the bottom has hardened and started to turn golden (lift up a little to check). Once one side has cooked, use a large flat spatula to flip the karantita on the other side. Add more oil if it looks dry. Cook for another seven to eight minutes or until that side has also turned golden. Turn off heat and prepare any desired toppings such as harissa or sautéed vegetables while the crust cools a bit.

### ***Kremówka Papieska (Pope John Paul II's Favorite Cake, Poland)***

(Adapted from <http://www.europeancuisines.com/Poland-Polish-Kremowka-papieska-Papal-cream-cake-recipe>)

Sheets from 1 pound package of frozen puff pastry dough, thawed

<b>Custard Cream</b>	3/4 cup sugar
2 cups whole milk	1/3 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract	Confectioners' sugar
A pinch of salt	Whipped cream (optional)
6 egg yolks, beaten	Preheat the oven to 400 F/200 C

1. Roll out each piece of puff pastry slightly and lightly score each sheet into nine sections.
2. Place each sheet between two sheets of baking parchment paper, place on a wire cooking rack, and place another cooling rack upside down on top of the upper piece of baking parchment.
3. Put the puff pastry into bake. After 15 minutes, remove the top cooling rack and the top layer of baking parchment. Bake for another 15 minutes until the puff pastry is golden.
4. Remove from the oven, remove the second layer of baking parchment, and cool completely.
5. In a medium saucepan, bring milk, vanilla, salt, egg yolks, sugar, and flour to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly with a wire whisk. Reduce the heat slightly and continue to boil one minute, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon.
6. Take the pan off the heat and plunge it into an ice water bath to cool.

7. Refrigerate the custard cream. When cold, spread the custard cream thickly over the bottom layer of pastry, then top with the second baked layer.
8. Dust with confectioners' sugar. Cut and serve, with whipped cream if desired.

Serves nine.

### ***Lahouh* (Israel)**

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(Adapted from Gur, Janna, *The Book of New Israeli Food: A Culinary Journey*, Tel Aviv: Al Hashulchan Gastronomic Media, 2007; and Larkey, Sue, *HaMitbah HaTemani*, The Yemenite Kitchen, Modan: Ben Shemen, 2009.)

3-1/2 cups bread flour	3 cups lukewarm water
1 ounce fresh yeast	3 slices white bread
1 level tablespoon salt	Oil for frying
1/2 tablespoon sugar	

1. Place flour, yeast, salt, and sugar in a deep bowl and mix with three cups of water to form a batter.
2. Soak the bread slices in water for a few minutes, then squeeze dry and blend. Add to batter and mix well—best done by hand!
3. Cover bowl and leave at room temperature for at least two hours to allow the batter to double in size.
4. Heat a nonstick frying pan and oil lightly. Wipe excess oil with paper towel—no more will be needed during frying. Ladle some batter into pan. Fry on medium heat until the top fills with bubbles and the bottom turns brown. Do not fry the other side.

The pan must be cooled between rounds, so the bottom of the *lahoukh* remains smooth, without bubbles. Hold it upside down under the cold tap.

Serve with blended tomato and cilantro, and hot relish.

Makes about 20.

### ***Lassi* (Sweet Yogurt Drink, India)**

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1 cup plain yogurt	2–4 teaspoons sugar (to taste)
1/2 cup milk	A dash of ground cardamom
1 cup chopped mango (peeled and stone removed) or one cup of canned mango pulp	(optional)

Put yogurt, sugar, mango, and water in the bowl of a blender or food processor. Process until frothy. Sprinkled cardamom powder on top.

## ***Lomper* (Potato Bread, Norway)**

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2 pounds peeled and boiled potatoes,  
still warm

1 teaspoon salt  
0.8–1 cup flour

1. Once cooked, mash the potatoes with the salt. Add flour and mix well. The least amount of flour will make them tastier, the highest amount will make the dough easier to roll out.
2. Remove potato dough and place on a breadboard or flat surface. Divide the dough into 12–14 pieces. Roll each one into a circular piece about 1/8 inch thick and 6 inches wide.
3. Heat a dry skillet or griddle over medium heat until hot. Place each *lompe* in pan and fry on both sides. They are ready when still light in color with darker spots. Stack the finished ones on a plate and cover with a kitchen towel to keep them from drying out.

Use each *lompe* as a wrap or eat plain with a condiment of choice.

Makes 12 or more.

## **Masala Vadai (Sri Lanka)**

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1/2 pound yellow dhal (yellow peas)	1/2 tablespoon fish paste (available in Indian and Asian stores)
Water to cover	
2-1/2 ounces shallots or onion diced small	1 sprig curry leaves, shredded finely
2 tablespoons fennel seed (grind a good 3/4 and leave the rest whole)	1/2 teaspoon turmeric
1/2 teaspoon chili powder or 5 green chilies diced small	Salt to taste
	1/4—1/2 cup vegetable oil

1. Wash the dhal to remove any powder. Place in a deep pan with enough water to cover and soak overnight.
2. Drain the dhal.
3. Place 3/4 of dhal in the bowl of a food processor and grind to a thick paste.
4. Heat one tablespoon oil in a small pan and fry the shallots/onions until they are caramelized.
5. Pour the dhal paste into a bowl and add all the other ingredients, including the remaining dhal, and mix well.

6. Using your hands or a spoon, take up enough of the dhal mixture to make a small patty. Press the mix into the palm of your hand gently to firm the mixture.
7. Heat 1/4 cup oil in a heavy skillet. Deep fry in batches till each *vadai* is a golden brown.

*Vadai* can be served either hot or cold.

Makes 30 *vadai*.

### Mint Chutney (India)

---

5 cups of mint leaves, washed	1 teaspoon sugar
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped	1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 chopped green chili	Salt to taste
	1/4 cup water

Place all the ingredients in the bowl of a blender. Process until smooth. Serve cold or at room temperature.

### Mititei/Mici (Romania)

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1 pound finely chopped or ground beef	1 teaspoon finely ground black pepper or more, to taste
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Salt to taste

A sprig of summer savory or thyme, leaves only *or* 1 tablespoon dried summer savory or thyme, crushed

1/2 teaspoon ground cumin	1/3 cup strong beef stock
1 teaspoon ground hot paprika	2 tablespoons vegetable oil
2 cloves garlic, peeled	

1. In a large bowl, mix together the ground beef, salt, pepper, summer savory or thyme, cumin, and paprika; set aside.
2. In a small bowl, crush the garlic with a pestle. Add half the beef stock, mix to a paste, and stir this into the meat mixture. Tightly cover and refrigerate for an hour or two or overnight. Prepare the grill.
3. Dip your hands in cold water and shape the meat mixture into sausages two inches long, one-inch thick (*mititei*).
4. Mix the remaining beef stock with the oil and liberally brush the *mititei* with this mixture.

5. Have ready a hot grill. Cook the *mititei*, brushing constantly; they should be glistening and very dark brown outside and a just-cooked, rosy-pink inside.

Serve with salads, pickles, mustard, and bread or fried potatoes. Delicious cold, the next day, too.

Serves four.

### ***Mofongo (Puerto Rico)***

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3 ripe plantains	1/4 pound <i>chicharrones</i> (fried pork rind) or fried bacon, crumbled
Oil for frying	Salt and pepper to taste
3 cloves garlic, crushed	Lime juice
2 tablespoons olive oil	

1. Slice plantain into 1/2-inch rounds.
2. Heat oil in a deep, heavy skillet to 325 F. Add plantain slices and fry in batches until they are browned on the outside. Drain on paper towels.
3. When they are done, place the plantains in the bowl of a processor, mix with garlic, olive oil, and *chicharrones* or bacon (or use a mortar and pestle if available). Process the mixture until they begin to get fluffy.
4. Taste and add salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle with lime juice to taste.
5. When done, form three balls from the mixture and serve with soup or meat dishes, or slice and eat as is.

Serves three to four.

### ***Mohinga (Spicy Noodle Soup, Myanmar/Burma)***

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(Adapted from Chan, Susan, *Flavors of Burma: Myanmar: Cuisine and Culture from the Land of Golden Pagodas*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 2003.)

3 tablespoons olive oil	1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 cup onion, minced	1-1/2 quart water
3 cloves finely chopped garlic	4 tablespoons fish sauce
1/2 ounces fresh ginger, finely chopped	4 tablespoons rice flour
1 teaspoon finely chopped lemongrass	1 pound catfish
1 teaspoon chili powder	1 pound rice noodles

1. Heat oil in deep, heavy pan, add onion, garlic, ginger, lemongrass, chili powder, and turmeric. Simmer over medium heat until fragrant.
2. Add water, fish sauce, and flour. Mix and bring to a boil, stirring thoroughly. Reduce to simmer for 20 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, cut catfish into chunks, add to soup, and cook for 10 minutes.
4. In a separate pan, boil water and cook rice noodles for approximately five minutes until tender. Drain and add to soup.

Serves four.

### **Momos (Nepal)**

---

Have ready a steamer pan with a basket for steaming.

4 cups white flour	1 teaspoon ground coriander
2–3 cups of water	1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
1 pound of pork, turkey, or chicken, cooked and finely chopped	1/2 teaspoon finely chopped chili pepper
1 medium onion, finely chopped	
1–2 garlic cloves, finely chopped (to taste)	

1. Place flour in a large bowl and mix with water. Knead the flour into a soft fine dough adding water as needed. Allow to stand for 10–15 minutes.
2. Combine the other ingredients in a bowl and mix well.
3. Shape the dough into balls of the size of an egg and flatten them on a floured surface.
4. Holding a ball in your palm, place one tablespoon of filling in the center. Fold over the sides and squeeze the edges tightly to seal and make a little bite-sized bag.

Boil water in steamer pan. Grease a steamer tray, place *momos* in it, and steam for 10 minutes.

Serve with a coriander or tomato chutney.

Makes about 25.

### **Mùhallabiyeh (Milk Pudding, Lebanon)**

---

3 cups milk	1/2 cup sugar
3 heaping tablespoons cornstarch or ground rice	Scant 1/4 teaspoon ground mastic (optional)

1-1/2 teaspoons orange flower water      1/2 cup toasted almonds or slivered  
 1-1/2 teaspoons rose water                      pistachios

1. Put the milk and cornstarch (or ground rice) in a saucepan. Place over a high heat and bring to the boil, stirring constantly.
2. Reduce the heat to low, add the sugar, and continue stirring for another five to seven minutes or until the liquid is thickened.
3. Add the orange flower and rose water and simmer, still stirring, for a couple more minutes.

Remove from the heat, pour into one large shallow bowl or four individual ones, depending on how you like to serve it, and let cool before garnishing with almonds or pistachios.

Serve chilled.  
 Serves four.

### **Mutton Kebabs (Shashlik, Central Asia)**

---

3 pounds lamb (mutton is hard to find in the United States), cut from the leg into 1-1/2-inch cubes	3 tablespoons finely chopped coriander
6 tablespoons lemon juice	1 tablespoon ground coriander seeds
2 medium onions minced	3 cloves garlic finely chopped
	1 teaspoon salt
	1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1. Combine all the ingredients except the lamb in a glass bowl and stir well. Add the lamb cubes and toss well.
2. Allow the mixture to chill in the refrigerator overnight at least 12 hours stirring occasionally. Drain off the marinade.
3. Sprinkle the meat lightly with salt and thread the pieces onto metal skewer. Do not crowd them. The pieces should not touch each other.
4. Grill or broil the lamb at least four inches from the flame for 7–12 minutes depending on how rare you like the meat. Sprinkle with salt and cayenne to taste.

For garnish, marinate thinly sliced onion in shallow bowl of white vinegar.

Serves six.

### **Nalistniki (Belarus)**

---

Heat oven to 350 F.



2 eggs	2 tablespoons sugar
2 cups milk	2–3 tablespoons melted butter
1-1/2 cups flour	1/2 cup sour cream

1. Beat eggs in a deep bowl. Blend in milk until well mixed. Stir in the flour and sugar.
2. Mix thoroughly into a thin batter.
3. Heat a flat griddle or frying pan with a little oil to coat the bottom.
4. Pour about two to three tablespoons onto the griddle and cook until pancake lightly bubbles. Flip over and cook quickly until lightly browned.
5. Set each pancake aside until all are done. When done, fold *nalistniki* in half, place on a baking sheet, cover with melted butter and sour cream, and bake for about one minute, until nicely crisped.

Makes about 12.

### ***Nihari* (Beef Stew with Ginger, Pakistan and India)**

---

2 large onions, sliced	8 black cardamom seeds, removed from pods
1 tablespoon oil	
1 pound boneless beef, cut into 1-1/2-inch cubs	8 black peppercorns
One-inch piece fresh ginger	1 two-inch piece of cinnamon stick
3 cloves garlic	
1 teaspoon chili powder	<b>Garnish</b>
1 teaspoon salt	Sliced ginger, sliced green chilies, chopped fresh coriander leaves
2 teaspoons flour	

### **Garam Masala (Spice Mixture)**

- 6 cloves
- 1 teaspoon cumin seed

1. Heat oil in a heavy pan. Add onions and cook for five or six minutes until they become golden brown.
2. Add the meat, cook over medium heat for 30 minutes, frequently stirring.
3. Blend the ginger and garlic with a little water in a food processor until they are smooth. Add to the meat and cook 10 minutes more. Add the chili powder and salt, and cook another 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, grind the spices to make a fine powder. Mix the flour and spices with a little water, stir into the beef mixture, and add four cups of water.

5. Mix well and cook, tightly covered, over very low heat for about an hour or until the meat is tender.
6. Before serving, add the garnish and serve with naan or other flatbread.

Serves four.

### ***Nohutlu Pilav* (Rice Pilaf with Chickpeas, Turkey)**

---

1 cup chickpeas	3 cups chicken stock
2 cups short-grain rice	4 tablespoons butter
Hot water to cover the rice	Salt to taste
1 teaspoon salt	Pepper to taste

1. Place chickpeas in a pan and cover with cold water. Soak overnight.
2. Next day, drain the water and re-cover the chickpeas with water. Place on stove, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to simmer and cook the chickpeas until tender. Set aside to cool. Drain the chickpeas and remove the skins with your fingers as much as possible.
3. Soak the rice in hot but not boiling water with one teaspoon of salt. When cool, drain and rinse under cold water until the water runs clear.
4. Bring the stock to the boil, add the chickpeas and butter. When boiling, stir in the rice and one teaspoon salt. Cover and turn down the heat to low.
5. Let simmer until all the liquid is absorbed by the rice, about 20 minutes. Small holes will appear on the surface of the rice when the liquid is absorbed.
6. Remove from the heat and place a few layers of paper towel under the lid and cover again. Set aside about 10–15 minutes. Before serving, mix gently to fluff the rice. Sprinkle with black pepper if desired.

Serves six.

### ***Okonomiyaki* (Japan)**

---

#### **The Pancake**

2 ounces plain all-purpose flour plus a pinch of salt	Katsuobushi flakes as desired
5 eggs	6 ounces thinly sliced beef or pork, cut in slivers, or 3 ounces squid, sliced into strips
1 small white cabbage, finely shredded	1 tablespoon cooking oil, for frying

1. Mix all the ingredients in a bowl, add a little water if the mixture is too thick to spread, and form into one large or several smaller thick pancakes.
2. Heat oil, in a heavy pan over low heat. Add pancake and cook slowly turning over when one side is done to cook the other.

When the pancake is cooked right through, place on a plate and brush with the sauce, then sprinkle with *aonori* (dried seaweed flakes), cut into mouthfuls, and eat with chopsticks.

**The Sauce (or Use a Commercial Sauce Available at Asian Grocery Stores)**

4 fluid ounces soy sauce (preferably *tamarikoyu*)

4 fluid ounces sake  
2 fluid ounces mirin  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 teaspoon rice vinegar

Place all ingredients in a small pan, bring to simmer in stove, and simmer until the sauce is thick (about 10 minutes).

***Oliebollen* (Round Doughnuts with Dried Fruit, the Netherlands)**

---

3-1/2 cups white flour

3/4 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon sugar

2-1/4 teaspoon fast-rising yeast

Finely grated zest of one lemon

2 eggs, well beaten

1-1/2 cups warm milk

3 ounces raisins

3 ounces currants

1 tart apple, grated

Oil for deep-frying

Powdered sugar for dusting

1. In a large bowl, mix together the flour, salt, sugar, yeast, and lemon zest.
2. Add the eggs and milk and beat well with a wooden spoon for several minutes until smooth.
3. Stir in the dried fruit, cover with a damp cloth, and leave in a warm place until doubled in size, about one hour.
4. When almost doubled in size, heat the oil.
5. Use two tablespoons to lift out plum-sized portions of the batter and drop them into the hot fat.
6. Fry in small batches until brown and cooked through, lowering the heat if necessary, to prevent burning.

7. Drain on paper towels and serve immediately, dusted with powdered sugar.

Makes about 20.

## **Pakorras (Indian Vegetable Fritters)**

---

1 medium eggplant (around 1 pound) or 1 medium sweet potato	1/2 teaspoon chili powder (or to taste)
7 ounces chickpea flour	1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon salt	1 cup cold water, more or less
	1 cup of vegetable oil for frying

1. Cut the vegetables into slices approximately 1/4-inch thick and 2 inches in diameter and set aside.
2. Combine the chickpea flour, salt, chili powder, and turmeric powder in a large bowl. Stir in enough water to make a thick batter.
3. Heat the oil in a wok or deep skillet until it is smoking. Mix the vegetable slices in the batter and drop them into the oil one at a time and cook until golden brown (being careful not to splatter the batter, as it can leave a permanent stain)
4. Remove the cooked vegetables with a slotted spoon and drain the excess fat.

Serve hot with tomato chutney or ketchup.

Serves four to six.

## **Papaya Salad (Laos)**

---

2 cups green papaya, chopped into cubes about 1/2-inch square	3 tablespoons lime juice
2 chilies, chopped	1 teaspoon lime zest
1 clove garlic, minced	1 teaspoon fish sauce
	3 tablespoons sugar

1. Toss chopped papaya, chilies, and garlic together in a bowl.
2. In a separate bowl, mix together lime juice, zest fish sauce, and sugar until all are incorporated (in Laos, these are placed in the bowl of a mortar and ground with a pestle into a paste).
3. Mix the lime mixture into the papaya mix until all the pieces are coated.

Serve cool.

Serves four.

### ***Pav Bhaji* (Cauliflower, Mumbai, India)**

---

1 small head of cauliflower, cut into florets (about 3–4 cups)	Salt to taste
3 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into large chunks	2–3 cups tomato puree
2 tablespoons oil	1 tablespoon <i>garam masala</i> ( <i>pav bhaji masala</i> if available; otherwise, any <i>garam masala</i> will do)
1 green bell pepper, finely chopped	1 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric	Four hard rolls
1 teaspoon chili powder or red chili paste	Sliced onion
1 teaspoon ginger–garlic paste (available from Indian grocery stores)	Lemon

1. Place cauliflower and potatoes in a deep pan and cover with water. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and cook until soft.
2. Heat the oil in a large skillet. Add finely chopped pepper and sauté until it softens. Add the ginger–garlic paste and sauté for 30 seconds more.
3. Add the turmeric and the chili powder and salt to taste. Sauté for a few seconds.
4. Add the tomato puree, boiled potatoes and cauliflower, *masala*, and butter.
5. Continue to sauté and mash with a potato masher until the mixture is smooth. Simmer for 20–25 minutes, adding water if necessary.
6. Cut the rolls in half and fry in butter with the cut side down. Serve on the side with sliced onion and lemon.

Note: To increase the vegetable content, you can add frozen or fresh peas, carrots, beans, etc.

Serves four.

### ***Phô* (Beef Noodle Soup, Vietnam)**

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(Adapted from *World Food Vietnam*, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2000.)

<b>Broth</b>	3 pound beef shanks
3 ounces fresh ginger, cut into 3–4 pieces	1-1/2 gallons water
1 large onion, halved	1 pound Chinese radishes, roughly chopped
4 shallots	3 carrots, roughly chopped
3 pound oxtail, chopped	4 star anise (whole)

- |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 6 cloves (whole)                     | 1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced |
| 2 cinnamon sticks                    | 2 green onions, chopped             |
| 1/4 cup <i>nuoc mam</i> (fish sauce) | 2 red chilies, crushed              |
| Salt to taste                        | 2 quarts water                      |

Garnish

**To Finish the Soup**

- |   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| 1/2 pound beef round, thinly sliced<br>across the grain | 1 cup fresh cilantro |
| 1 pound dried rice noodles                              | 1/2 cup fresh mint   |
|   | 1 lime, wedged       |

1. Preheat broiler and broil the ginger, onion, and shallots on a baking sheet for one to two minutes, or until browned. Set aside.
2. Place oxtails and beef shanks in a large deep pan with 1-1/2 gallons water. Bring to boil. When water boils, skim surface until clear and free of foam, about 10 minutes. Add broiled ginger, onion, and shallots and the radishes, carrots, and spices.
3. Partially cover and simmer over medium heat 3-1/2 hours.
4. Allow to cool. Strain broth and remove the meat and vegetables. Set aside and save vegetables for use in another side dish. Allow the broth to stand in a cool place—a refrigerator is fine. Once fat rises to the top, skim and discard it. Add fish sauce and salt. (yields approximately eight cups).
5. Soak the rice noodles for approximately 15 minutes in warm water.
6. Bring broth to a boil and add the thinly sliced beef, sliced onion, green onion, and chilies. Bring to boil, reduce to simmer over medium heat, and cook until beef is cooked through, about 10 minutes.
7. Meanwhile, heat two quarts (or more) of water in a large pan to boiling. Add soaked noodles and cook for one to three minutes. Drain immediately.
8. To serve, spoon noodles into bowl and top with broth and vegetables. Garnish with coriander, mint, and lime.

Serves four to six.

***Pholourie* (Trinidad)**

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1/2 pound split peas  | 1 tablespoon flour                           |
| 1 clove finely chopped garlic   | 1 teaspoon salt                              |
| 1/2 teaspoon saffron powder (or turmeric if saffron is not available) | Juice of 1/2 of a small lime                 |
| 1/8 teaspoon baking soda  | Two cups of oil or as needed for deep frying |
| 1 teaspoon baking powder  |  |

1. Wash the split peas and leave them to soak overnight.
2. Drain the peas and grind to a smooth consistency. Add all the other ingredients, mix well, and let it stand for an hour, adding a little water if the mixture becomes too dry. Then beat it again until it is light and fluffy.
3. Heat the oil in a deep fryer. Drop the mixture by teaspoonful into hot oil. Fry until golden brown or until the *pholourie* floats to the top.

Drain and serve immediately with tamarind or mango chutney.

Makes around two dozen, depending on size.

### **Pie Floater (Australia)**

---

1 large brown onion, finely chopped	2 sheets frozen pie pastry
2 tablespoons vegetable oil	2 sheets frozen puff pastry
1 pound lean finely chopped or ground beef	4 cups beef broth
3/4 cup beef or vegetable stock	2 teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
1 tablespoon cornstarch	1 pound dried green peas, soaked overnight in enough water to cover
Pinch of salt	
Pinch of pepper	1 teaspoon baking soda

1. The night before, place peas in a deep pan, cover with water mixed with baking soda, and allow to stand overnight. Drain when ready to cook.
2. Preheat oven to 450 F.
3. In a saucepan, sauté the onions in a little oil. Add the beef and brown it.
4. Add the stock, condiments, and cornstarch. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly to incorporate the cornstarch until a thick gravy is formed about five minutes.
5. Grease four 3 × 6-inch pie pans. Cut 3 × 7-inch circles from piecrust pastry to line the bases and sides of pans. Fill with beef and gravy mixture. Brush rims with water.
6. Cut 3 × 7-inch circles from puff pastry. Place over meat. Press to seal. Trim. Place pies onto hot tray.
7. Bake in preheated for 20–25 minutes or until golden.
8. While the pies are baking, make the peas gravy.
9. Wash the rehydrated peas to get rid of any dirt and put them in a saucepan with one teaspoon baking soda and the beef broth.
10. Bring to a boil and cook till the peas are very soft.

11. Mash or puree the peas and stock mix to the consistency of thick soup.
12. Spoon peas gravy onto serving plate and place a hot pie on top.

Makes four pies.

### ***Piri-Piri* Chicken (Mozambique)**

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1 small chicken, 3 pounds or less  | 4 cloves garlic, crushed                                     |
| 2 tablespoons crushed, dried <i>piri-piri</i> or bird's-eye chili peppers (may substitute other flaky dried chili peppers) | 2 tablespoons lemon juice, or juice of a large lemon         |
| 1 teaspoon salt  | 1–2 tablespoons olive oil                                    |
| 1 tablespoon crushed red pepper flakes (crushed <i>piri-piri</i> or bird's-eye peppers would be best)                      | <i>Piri-piri</i> sauce or other hot chili sauce (see recipe) |

1. Place chicken on a cutting board and cut downward along the spine with a sharp knife. Splay the chicken in half on the board.
2. Place the salt, hot pepper flakes, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil in the bowl of a food processor or blender and process until well mixed.
3. Remove from blender and rub the chicken on both sides with the mix. Allow to stand for at least 15 minutes, or longer.
4. Heat grill to appropriate temperature. When ready, roast chicken on both sides until done. While cooking, the chicken can be basted with *piri-piri* sauce.

### ***Piri-Piri* Sauce**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 6 hot chilies, <i>piri-piri</i> or chilies arbol, seeded | 6 tablespoons olive oil, or more to taste |
| 1 tablespoon garlic                                      | 4 tablespoons lemon juice                 |
| 1 teaspoon chopped oregano                               | Salt to taste                             |

1. Seed the chilies by cutting down the center and removing seeds under running water. Be careful not to touch your eyes or sensitive parts until your fingers are completely clear of the seeds.
2. Place ingredients in the bowl of a blender and process until fairly smooth.

Serves two to four.



## **Pirozhki (Small Savory Pastries with a Variety of Fillings, Russia)**

These baked *pirozhki* are made with a flaky pastry dough instead of the more common yeast-raised dough. Choose the filling you want and make it first, so it will be cool when you are ready to assemble the *pirozhki* before baking. Each filling recipe makes enough for 16–18 *pirozhki*.

### **Pirozhki Dough**

3 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup (8 tablespoons) cold unsalted butter

1 egg, well beaten

1/2 to 2/3 cup cold milk

Glaze: 1 egg beaten lightly with  
1 tablespoon milk

1. Whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Cut the cold butter into small pieces. Use a pastry cutter to blend the flour and butter together until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs and no lumps of butter remain.
2. Using a large spoon, stir in the beaten egg. Add the cold milk, two tablespoons at a time, mixing with the spoon, then with your hands, lightly kneading the ingredients together in the bowl to form a soft, smooth dough. Add only enough milk to make a smooth dough that is neither crumbly nor wet.
3. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and let the pastry dough sit at room temperature for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
4. Divide the dough in half, keeping one half covered with the towel. Roll out the other half on a lightly floured surface, to a thickness of 1/8 inch. Use a four-inch round cookie cutter to cut the dough into circles, setting them aside on a lightly floured surface. Roll and cut the remaining half of dough, rerolling and cutting any scraps, to make a total of 16–18 circles of pastry dough.
5. Working with one circle of dough at a time, roll the dough slightly thinner, then place one heaping tablespoon of filling in the center of the circle. Use your finger to moisten the edge of the circle lightly with water, then fold the dough in half, over the filling, to form a half-moon shape. Press the edges together with the tines of a fork, to seal them tightly. Repeat with the remaining dough circles.
6. Place half of the filled pastries on a large ungreased baking sheet. Brush the egg–milk glaze lightly over the tops. Bake on the middle rack of the oven at 400 F for 15–18 minutes, or until the tops are lightly browned. Glaze and bake the remaining half of the pastries.

Serve hot.

### Meat Filling

1 pound ground beef or pork  
 2 tablespoons sunflower oil  
 1/2 cup finely chopped onion  
 2 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice

1. Cook the ground meat in a skillet until it is completely browned, then transfer the meat and all the juices to a bowl.
2. Heat the oil in the skillet, add the onion, and sauté until the onion is translucent. Add the garlic and sauté two minutes longer.
3. Stir the onion mixture and all the oil from the skillet into the meat in the bowl. Stir in the pepper, salt, and allspice, mixing well. Cool thoroughly before using. Makes two cups of filling.

### Sauerkraut Filling

2 cups sauerkraut, rinsed under cold water and drained well before measuring  
 1/4 cup finely chopped onions  
 1/4 cup finely shredded carrots  
 1/2 cup white wine

1/2 teaspoon white wine vinegar (optional)  
 1/2 teaspoon caraway seeds  
 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, for 15–20 minutes, until the onions are soft. Transfer the mixture to a shallow bowl to cool completely before using.
2. Makes two cups.

### Potato–Bacon Filling

2 cups firm waxy potatoes cut into 1/4-inch cubes  
 1 strip thick-slice bacon, cut into 1/4-inch squares

1/4 cup finely chopped onions  
 2 teaspoons white vinegar  
 1/4 teaspoon salt  
 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. Steam the potato cubes (or boil them gently), just until tender but not falling apart. Drain the potatoes thoroughly and set aside in a bowl.
2. Cook the bacon in a small skillet until it just begins to brown. Add it to the potatoes in the bowl, leaving behind the bacon fat in the skillet.
3. Sauté the onions in the bacon fat until they become translucent. Turn off the heat and stir in the vinegar, scraping any browned bits of bacon off the bottom of the skillet. Stir in the salt and pepper.

4. Add the onion mixture to the potatoes, stirring gently until all the ingredients are well combined. Cool before using.

5. Makes two cups.

Makes 16–18 pieces.

### ***Pofesen* (Austria)**

---

2 slices of bread (white bread, toast  
bread is also possible)

A pinch of sugar

Powdered sugar

Approx. 1/2 cup plum jam

Cinnamon (to taste)

1/2 pint milk

Cooking oil

2 eggs

1. Spread the plum jam onto one of the slices, cover with the other slice, then press them together.
2. In a bowl, lightly beat the eggs with the milk and a pinch of sugar.
3. Place the prepared bread in the egg mixture, leave for a minute to absorb as much liquid as possible.
4. In the meantime, heat some vegetable oil in a nonstick pan. Place the soaked bread in oil and fry on both sides until golden brown.
5. Once fried, leave on a cooling rack lined with kitchen towels that will soak the excess fat.

Serve with powdered sugar and cinnamon to taste.

Serves one, but recipe can be expanded for more servings.

### **Pork Loin Sandwich with Sweet-and-Sour Red Cabbage (Denmark)**

---

2–4 slices roast pork with crackling  
(crispy pork skin)

1 tablespoon strong, coarse mustard

2 pickles, sliced

4 tablespoons—sweet–sour red cab-  
bage (see recipe)

1 lady apple or 1/2 apple, e.g., Cox’s  
Orange Pippins, thinly sliced

3 tablespoons good-quality  
mayonnaise

Some red onion rings (optional)

1. Warm up pork loin and red cabbage if necessary.
2. Stir mayonnaise with mustard and spread on bread slices.
3. Place red cabbage, meat, sliced gherkins, sliced apple, and onion rings in layers on one slice of bread and close with the other slice to make a sandwich.

### Sour-Sweet Red Cabbage

1 medium red cabbage

1/2 bottle red wine

Spices: clove, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, pepper, star anise

2 onions

Salt

3 tablespoons duck or goose fat

2 cups balsamic or cider vinegar

2 tablespoons cane sugar, depending on the sweetness of wine and vinegar

1. Boil red wine with dried spices for 5 minutes and leave to infuse for 15 minutes.
2. Remove stem from cabbage head if there is one and shred it. Peel and chop onion.
3. Sauté red cabbage and onion in goose fat in large thick-bottomed pan.
4. Pour red wine through a sieve to remove the spices into pan and add salt.
5. Leave to simmer for at least one hour—several hours' cooking will give a soft and wonderfully tasty cabbage.

Season red cabbage with vinegar and sugar.

Serves two.

### Pork Loin with Crisp Crackling (Denmark)

---

Approx. 5 pounds boned pork loin, scored, with rind

2–3 tablespoons salt

Preheat the oven to 390 F

1. Make sure the rind is scored all over. Rub with coarse salt.
2. Put the pork loin in a baking tray. If necessary, prop up with crimped tin foil, so the rind is quite horizontal. Add one cup water.
3. Insert a meat thermometer in the middle of the loin and roast for 1-1/2 hour or until thermometer registers 180 F. Check if the crackling is crisp. If not, turn the oven up to 480–580 F and keep roasting until the thermometer registers 180 F.

### Potato Curry (India)

---

1-1/2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 teaspoon cumin seeds

2 teaspoons turmeric powder

1–2 teaspoons chili powder

1 pound of potatoes, boiled, peeled, and cubed

Salt to taste

3 cups of hot water

1. Heat the oil in a wok over medium heat. When hot, sauté the spices for 30 seconds. Do not burn them.
2. Add the potatoes, then the hot water. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently until the resulting gravy thickens. Add more water if needed.

Serve with puri (a deep-fried Indian bread) and a chutney.

Serves four.

### ***Pupusa (El Salvador)***

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(From “Recipe: Pupusa.” *World Geography: Understanding a Changing World*. ABC-CLIO, 2012. Web. April 26, 2012.)

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 3 cups masa harina (available in Latin-American stores or as an instant mix in many supermarkets) | 2 cups water                      |
|   | 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese |
|   | 1/4–1/2 cup butter                |
| 1/8 teaspoon salt or to taste   |                                   |

1. Combine the masa harina, salt, and water in a large mixing bowl and mix well with a spoon. The masa should have the consistency of chocolate-chip cookie dough.
2. Shape the dough into patties, about 1/8 of an inch thick and three inches in diameter, and cover them with a dampened cloth.

### **To Assemble the *Pupusas***

1. Spoon about one tablespoon of cheese in the center of a corn patty. Put another patty on top of the filling and press the edges of the patties together with your fingertips to seal the *pupusa*. No filling should be exposed. If it is, cover it with a piece of masa and pat the spot smooth.
2. Have ready a griddle or heavy skillet. Melt 1 tablespoon butter on it. Place *pupusas* on it and cook over medium–high heat, turning once, until they are browned, about four minutes per side. Continue to cook all the *pupusas* on buttered griddle until all are done.

Serve at once with coleslaw and tomato salsa.

### ***Red Pepper Chutney (Afghanistan)***

---

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4 red bell peppers           | 1 whole head of garlic     |
| 1-1/2 ounces hot red chilies | 1/2 cup white wine vinegar |

2–3 teaspoons sugar, to taste                      1–2 teaspoons salt, to taste  
 1–2 teaspoons *sia dona* (nigella seeds)

1. Wash the bell peppers, then dry them well. Deseed them and chop them up roughly. Deseed the hot chilies and chop them roughly, taking care in handling them. Peel the cloves of garlic and roughly chop.
2. Place the peppers and the chilies in a blender with the garlic and blend to a thick puree. Do not blend for too long or the mixture will become too watery. Add the sugar, salt, and vinegar, adding a bit less or more of each ingredient according to taste. Lastly stir in the *sia dona*.

Store in clean, dry jar in a refrigerator. This chutney will keep for about a month.

### **Rice and Beans (Belize)**

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(Adapted from Albala, Ken, ed., *Food Cultures of the World Encyclopaedia*, ABC-CLIO, 2011.)

1/2 pound red kidney beans, soaked overnight	2 ounces salt pork or salted beef
4 cups water	2 teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped
1 teaspoon salt	1 cup coconut milk
2–4 cloves garlic, crushed and chopped	1 cup rice
1 large onion, coarsely chopped	Ground black pepper to taste

1. Place soaked, drained beans in a deep pan with garlic, onions, and salted meat. Cover, bring to boil, reduce heat, and cook until beans are almost tender, about one hour.
2. Make sure liquid is reduced to about one cup. Add thyme and coconut milk and bring to boil.
3. Stir in rice, cover, reduce heat, and cook until rice is done, about 20 minutes. Sprinkle with black pepper.

Serves four.

To make this truly Belizean, serve with a hot sauce, habanero is preferred, but be very careful.

### **Ris Graz (Burkinabe Fried Rice, Burkina Faso)**

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3 garlic cloves	1/2 onion, finely chopped
4 tomatoes, chopped	2 hot chilies

Fresh parsley, chopped	2 cups rice
4 tablespoons tomato paste	4 green peppers, chopped
1 quart water	Oil for frying
1 bouillon cube	Salt and black pepper, to taste

1. Place in the bowl of a food processor. Process garlic, tomatoes, chilies, onion, and parsley to make a paste.
2. Add half a cup of oil to a large pan and spoon the chili paste into this. Place the pan containing the oil and chili tomato paste on a medium-high burner and cook for eight minutes.
3. Stir in the tomato paste. Add a quart of water and the bouillon cube and bring to a boil while stirring.
4. Add the rice and peppers. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook for 15 minutes. Check the water, reduce to a very gentle simmer, and continue cooking, covered, for a further 10 minutes (all the water should be absorbed).

Serves four to six.

### **Roasted Cockles (Cambodia)**

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(Adapted from Susan Herrmann Loomis, *Epicurious*. <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Roasted-Cockles-104991>. March 2001.)

Preheat oven to 450 F.	2 chilies, minced
2 pound cockles, clean and rinsed	1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 cup olive oil	2 tablespoons lime juice
2 teaspoons kosher salt	

1. Place prepared cockles in a shallow roasting pan and bake for 5–10 minutes, until open (shaking tray occasionally).
2. In the meantime, combine olive oil and seasonings in a saucepan over medium heat. Let simmer for two to four minutes. Set aside.
3. Discard closed cockles and place open cockles and their juices to a serving bowl. Toss with oil and serve.

Serves six to eight.

### **Roz Bi Laban (Rice Pudding, Egypt)**

---

1 cup Egyptian rice (similar to Arborio or sushi rice)	2 cups filtered water
	1/2 cup sugar

- |                            |                                       |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 teaspoon cinnamon        | Pinch of salt                         |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla extract | 1/2 teaspoon rosewater (optional)     |
| 1/2 cup raisins            | Handful of unsalted peeled pistachios |
| 4 cups whole milk          | (optional)                            |

1. Rinse rice under running water until water runs clear. Drain and add to pot and cover with two cups of filtered water and a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to low. Cook for 20 minutes and fluff with a fork.
2. Add sugar, cinnamon, and rosewater (if desired) to the rice and mix well.
3. Add four cups of whole milk and mix to incorporate. Increase heat to medium and keep stirring till the sugar dissolves and the rice and milk are well incorporated. The mixture will start to thicken after about 15 minutes of stirring.
4. Add the vanilla extract and raisins into the mixture, and stir again.
5. Serve warm or cold, with chopped unsalted pistachios, if desired.

Serves four to six.

### ***Salsa Criolla (Argentina)***

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|--|--|
| 1 onion, finely chopped                                  | 1 tablespoon flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped |
| 1 sweet red pepper; finely chopped (red bell or pimento) | 1/2 cup olive oil                              |
| 1 green bell pepper, finely chopped                      | 1/4 cup red wine vinegar                       |
| 1 tomato, seeded and finely chopped                      | Salt and pepper to taste                       |
| 1 clove garlic, finely minced                            |  |

1. Mix all of the ingredients together and serve.

### ***Samkeh Harrah (Spicy Fish Sandwich, Lebanon)***

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- |  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2 pound white sea fish filet           | <b>For the <i>Tarator</i> Sauce</b> |
| 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil   | 1/2 cup tahini                      |
| 4 garlic cloves, crushed               | Juice of 1 lemon, or to taste       |
| 1 cup finely chopped cilantro          | 1/2 cup water                       |
| 1/2 teaspoon ground coriander          | Sea salt                            |
| 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin              | <b>For the <i>Garlic</i> Sauce</b>  |
| 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes | 5 large garlic cloves               |
|  | 1 medium potato, boiled and mashed  |



1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
3–4 tablespoons strained yoghurt

1 medium tomato, thinly  
sliced

1 cup shredded lettuce

### For the Sandwiches

6 medium pita breads

Preheat the oven to

180° C

1. Lay the fish filet, skin side down, on a grill in a baking dish. Bake the fish for 25–30 minutes or until it is just done. Do not overcook the fish or it will turn rubbery. Let cool. Flake into small pieces, cover, and set aside.
2. Sauté the oil, garlic, cilantro, and ground coriander in a frying pan, stirring all the time, until the aroma rises. Then add the cumin and red pepper. Mix well and remove from the heat.
3. Make the *tarator* by mixing the ingredients together, adding salt to taste, until you have a creamy sauce, and pour into a small saucepan. Place over a medium heat and bring to a boil stirring regularly. When the sauce begins to boil, add the sautéed coriander and simmer for about five minutes or until it starts to separate and the oil rises to the surface. Remove from heat and let cool.
4. Drain the liquid from the fish if any and add to the tahini sauce. Mix well, then taste and adjust the seasoning.
5. Make the garlic sauce by mashing the garlic cloves with a little sauce in a mortar using a pestle. Mix the mashed potato in, then slowly drizzle in the oil as if making a mayonnaise. Taste the sauce, and if it is too sharp, add the strained yoghurt and more salt to taste.
6. Open the pita bread at the seam and lay every two layers over one another, rough side up. Spread each top circle with a little garlic sauce. Divide the fish equally among the pita breads, scatter equal amounts of tomato and lettuce over the fish, and sprinkle with a little sea salt. Roll the pita over the fish filling and either leave each sandwich whole and cut in two diagonally—you can toast the sandwich lightly in a Panini toaster or against a hot skillet. Wrap the bottom halves with a paper napkin and serve immediately.
7. Alternately, use the fish as a topping for crostini. Toast six slices of brown or other bread and spread each with garlic sauce. Spread a little shredded lettuce over the garlic and cover with equal amounts of fish mixture. Scatter a small amount of finely diced tomatoes all over and sprinkle with a little sea salt. Serve immediately with lemon wedges.
8. If you want to make the sandwich with octopus, sauté the cilantro and garlic with all the seasonings as described in the following text and add lemon juice to taste. Once cooled, mix with boiled, chopped octopus. Make the sandwich with the same garnish.

Serves six.

## Seadas or Sebadas (Italy)

---

14 ounces young pecorino sardo cheese	2 ounces lard or butter
1 cup water	Lukewarm water
1 tablespoon durum wheat flour	Salt to taste
Zest of 1/2 lemon	1/2 cup honey
18 ounces all-purpose flour	Extra-virgin olive oil for frying

1. Put the cheese in a medium pot. Add one cup water, the durum wheat flour, and the zest of 1/2 lemon. Warm up the mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly until the ingredients have combined, and the mixture is uniform in texture. Take the pot off the heat, spread the mixture on a dry surface (e.g., chopping block) to a 1/2-inch thickness, and let it cool.
2. In the meantime, put the all-purpose flour on a working surface in a heap. Make a hole in the center (resembling a volcano), add the lard or butter, and start working the fat into the flour. Add a little lukewarm water at a time until you have a dough you can knead. If the dough is too dry and tears, add a little more water. If the dough is too wet and sticks to your hands, add a little more flour. Knead the dough for at least seven minutes. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let it rest for at least 20 minutes.
3. When the dough has rested, roll it out to a uniform thickness of 1/8 inch. Cut the dough into one-inch squares. Cut the cooled cheese mixture into 1/2-inch cubes. The cubes should fit onto the squares of dough, and there should be enough dough on each side of the cube of cheese so you can fold the dough over and pinch it closed. The finished *seadas* should look like triangles. Make sure to pinch the edges well, so the *seadas* do not open when you fry them.
4. In a large skillet, at least three inches deep, heat up the extra-virgin olive oil for frying. The oil should be hot, but not smoking (200–210 F). Fry the *seadas* several at a time, making sure not to overcrowd the frying pan. The *seadas* should always sizzle while they're frying.
5. When the *seadas* are golden brown, take them out of the oil and put them on a plate covered with paper towels.
6. Drizzle the *seadas* with honey and enjoy hot.

Serves six.

## Shashlyk (Skewered Grilled Meat)

---

2 pounds pork or beef, trimmed of most of the fat and cut into 1-1/2 to 2-inch cubes	1 cup white wine
	1/2 cup sunflower oil

1/4 cup white vinegar (or 2 table-  
spoons white vinegar and 2 table-  
spoons sour dill pickle brine)  
1 large onion, sliced crosswise into  
thin rings  
4 large garlic cloves, minced

4–6 whole cloves or whole juniper  
berries, crushed  
2 bay leaves, crumbled  
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon black pepper

1. Combine all the ingredients in a large nonreactive bowl. Stir to mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours, turning the meat two or three times while it marinates.
2. Thread the meat cubes directly from the marinade onto metal skewers (do not pat the meat dry before skewering it), leaving a small space between each piece of meat. Discard the remaining marinade.
3. Have very hot grill ready, preferably with charcoal. Cook the meat four inches above very hot coals for approximately 15 minutes, turning the meat two or three times, until it is no longer pink in the middle. Serve hot, accompanied by chilled vodka or a hearty red wine.

Serves four.

### ***Shawarma Ghanam* (Lamb Shawarma, Lebanon)**

---

Shawarma is not usually prepared at home, but you can approximate the result by cutting the meat in long strips, marinating it in shawarma spices, then sautéing it very quickly in a skillet. Serves four to six.

1-3/4 pounds lamb from the shoulder,  
thinly sliced (about 3 cups)  
2 medium onions, thinly sliced  
Juice of 1 lemon, or to taste  
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice  
Few sprigs fresh thyme, leaves  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
2–4 tablespoons olive oil, for sautéing

#### **For the Sandwiches**

2–3 round pita breads about 8-inch di-  
ameter or 4–6 oval ones  
4–6 small tomatoes, thinly sliced  
1/2 medium-sized red onion, very  
thinly sliced  
4–6 gherkins, thinly sliced lengthways  
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped mint  
1/2 teaspoon finely chopped flat-leaf  
parsley  
Tahini sauce, to taste

1. Put the meat in a large mixing bowl, add the onion, lemon juice, olive oil, spices, thyme, salt, and pepper. Mix well, then let marinate in the refrigerator for two to four hours, stirring occasionally.

2. Place a large skillet over a medium–high heat. When it is very hot, add the meat and sauté for a couple of minutes or until done to your liking.
3. If you are using round pita breads, tear them open at the seams to have four to six separate circles. Arrange equal quantities of meat down the middle of each bread. Garnish with equal quantities of tomato, onion, gherkins, and herbs and drizzle on as much tahini sauce as you like. Roll each sandwich quite tight. Wrap the bottom half of the sandwiches with a paper napkin and serve immediately.
4. If you are using oval pita bread, open at the seam to create a large pocket. Spread the bottom half with the tahini sauce and fill each bread with equal amounts of sandwich ingredients. Serve immediately.

Serves six.

### ***Sopaipillas* (Pumpkin Fritters, Chile)**

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(Adapted from <http://allrecipes.com/recipe/chilean-style-sopaipillas/>)

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1 cup (8 ounces) prepared pumpkin pulp, canned or frozen | 1 teaspoon baking powder |
| 1/2 cup melted butter                                    | 1 teaspoon salt          |
| 1/4 cups of flour  | 2 cups vegetable oil     |

1. In a large bowl, mix the pumpkin and melted butter.
2. In a separate bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt.
3. Stir the flour mixture into the pumpkin until it is well blended and forms a dough.
4. Put the dough on a lightly floured board and knead until smooth, adding more flour if necessary. Cover the dough with a towel and let it rest for 15 minutes.
5. Roll out the dough to 1/8-inch thick, and cut into 3-inch diameter circles with a glass or cookie cutter. Prick each circle a few times with a fork.
6. Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over medium–high heat until hot, 385 F. Place several of the dough circles into hot oil at a time and cook three or four minutes until lightly browned.
7. Drain on paper towels.

Serve hot with warm *chancaca* sauce.

Makes about 16.

#### **Chancaca Sauce**

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 cup brown sugar | 3–4 cinnamon sticks or 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon (and/or ground cloves) |
| 2 cups water      |  |

2 tablespoons honey  
1/2 orange rind

1 tablespoon corn starch

1. Combine all the ingredients except the cornstarch in a saucepan and cook over low heat for 10 minutes, stirring constantly. If using cinnamon sticks, remove them before next step.
2. Mix the cornstarch with one tablespoon of cold water and add it to the syrup. Mix well and cook for a few minutes until the syrup thickens.

### ***Souvlaki* (Grilled Pork, Greece)**

---

1 pound of pork tenderloin or shoulder, cut into one-inch cubes

#### **Marinade**

1 clove garlic  
1/4 cup olive oil  
1 tablespoon dried oregano  
1 bay leaf, crumbled  
2 tablespoons lemon juice

1/2 cup red wine

Salt and pepper to taste

Wooden skewers, soaked in water for several hours so that they don't burn while cooking.

1. Heat the barbecue or grill to high.
2. Combine all the marinade ingredients in a glass bowl, pour over the meat, and mix well. Cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight.
3. Skewer the meat, placing five or six pieces of meat on each skewer. Lower the heat to medium and cook for 10–15 minutes, turning from time to time to make sure that they are thoroughly cooked.

Serve with pita bread and *tzatziki* sauce (see recipe).

### **Tacos, Basic Meat (Mexico)**

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#### **Filling (*Picadillo*)**

2 tablespoons cooking oil  
1 medium onion finely chopped  
1 clove garlic, finely chopped  
1 pound ground beef

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon ground *guajillo* chili  
(optional)

1 medium tomato, finely chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Heat oil in a frying pan, add chopped onion and garlic, and sauté until transparent.
2. Add beef, cumin, ground *guajillo* chili, and tomatoes and cook gently, stirring, until meat is browned. Drain excess fat from pan.

### To Assemble

Small amount of oil  
12 corn tortillas

Picadillo  
Shredded lettuce  
Salsa, fresh or bottled, to taste

1. Pour a small amount of oil on a paper towel and rub around a heavy frying pan. Heat pan over medium heat until hot.
2. Place each tortilla on heated pan until it puffs slightly.
3. Set filling and shredded lettuce to taste on one side of taco. Place salsa to taste on taco. Fold in half and serve.

Makes 12 tacos.

### Taiwanese Beef Noodle Soup

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(Adapted from <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Taiwanese-Beef-Noodle-Soup-231502#ixzz1zPdXTZjZ>)

5 cups water	1/2 cup loosely packed fresh cilantro sprigs
1 cup soy sauce	4 whole star anise
1/4 cup packed light brown sugar	1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
2 teaspoons fresh ginger, peeled and smashed	2-1/2 pounds beef short ribs
1 bunch green onions, with white part smashed and green part chopped	2 cups chicken broth
3 garlic cloves, smashed	10 ounces Chinese wheat-flour noodles
10 fresh cilantro stems	1 cup fresh mung bean sprouts
	Fresh cilantro sprigs

1. Bring water to boil in a five- to six-quart pot. Add soy sauce, brown sugar, ginger, white parts of green onion, garlic, cilantro stems, star anise, and red pepper flakes in, then reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 10 minutes.
2. Add short ribs and continue simmering, covered, turning occasionally, until meat is very tender but not falling apart. This may take up to 2-1/2 hours; when done, let meat stand in cooking liquid, uncovered, 1 hour.
3. Remove meat from broth and cut it across the grain into 1/2-inch-thick slices.
4. Skim beef broth and discard solids; add chicken broth and meat and reheat soup over moderately low heat.
5. Cook noodles in unsalted boiling water until tender, then drain and add to broth.
6. Garnish with green part of green onions, and cilantro sprigs and mung bean sprouts.

Serves four as main course.

## Tamales Nejos Frijol Negro (Tamales with Black Beans, Guerrero, Mexico)

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1 pound prepared masa (corn dough, fresh or from a mix)	About 10 epazote (pigweed) leaves, chopped
10 banana leaves 5" × 12"	Kosher salt to taste
1/2 pound black beans, boiled and pureed	

1. Have ready a steamer, large enough to take 10 tamale packets.
2. Prepare masa by mixing flour with water or buy it prepared in Hispanic market.
3. Tear 10 long strips from banana leaves, to be used for ties.
4. Set banana leaves on a heated *comal* or skillet and toast lightly. Spread leaf out flat.
5. Divide dough into 10 pieces. Form dough into an oblong, then flatten into an oval shape on each banana leaf, leaving wide margins on edges for folding.
6. Divide beans into 10 portions. Spread bean puree evenly in the center of the masa. Sprinkle chopped epazote over beans.
7. Fold banana leaves into packets: fold the bottom of the leaf to the top and press lightly at the edge to seal. Then fold the left end into the center and the right end into the center. Tie the bundles with a leaf strip around the center of the packet, with the knot at the folded edges.
8. Put all the tamales in the steamer, either upright or stacked. Steam the tamales for 35 minutes at medium heat or when each tamale separates easily from the leaf.

Makes 10.

## Tashkent Ground Beef Kebab

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(Adapted from Visson, Lynn, *The Art of Uzbek Cooking*, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1998.)

2 pounds ground beef	1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 egg white	2 medium onions peeled and cut in thick rings
1 teaspoon cumin seeds	Tomatoes and cucumbers for garnish
1 teaspoon salt	

1. In a large bowl, mix the ground beef with the egg white, cumin, salt, and pepper, kneading the mixture with your hands until it is well blended.
2. Chill it in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

3. Wet your hands and form the meat into balls the size of a large walnut and thread them on metal skewers alternating the meat with the onion rings.
4. Push the point of the skewer through the ball of meat and press it tightly around the skewer.
5. Have ready a hot grill. Grill or broil for eight minutes turning the skewers once.

Slide the kebabs off the skewers on to serving plates.

Serves six.

Serve with quartered tomatoes and sliced onions.

### **Tempeh Satay (Thailand)**

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1 block of tempeh, cut into 1/2-inch pieces	1 teaspoon hot chili sauce
Oil for frying	2 tablespoons hoisin sauce
Wooden skewers	2 tablespoons water

#### **Peanut Sauce**

2 tablespoons peanut butter

1 teaspoon soy sauce

1. Thread four to five pieces of tempeh on each skewer.
2. Heat oil in a frying pan and lightly fry each skewer until golden brown. Set aside in a small bowl.
3. Combine the peanut butter, soy sauce, hot chili sauce, hoisin sauce, and water and stir to make a smooth paste.
4. Arrange satay on a plate and cover with peanut sauce.

Makes about four skewers.

### **Tit Heo (Shredded Pork, Vietnam)**

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(Adapted from *World Food Vietnam*, Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2000.)

2 pounds lean pork shoulder	8 green onions, chopped
2 tablespoons sugar	1/2 ounces ginger, peeled and chopped
3 tablespoons fish sauce (nuoc mam)	1 chili, chopped
3 shallots, chopped	



1. Thinly slice pork shoulder, set aside. Over medium heat, combine sugar and fish sauce. Add the remaining ingredients and pour over the pork to marinate overnight in the refrigerator.
2. Preheat oven to 375 F
3. Bring to room temperature and place in a covered baking dish. Bake at 375 F for 40 minutes, or until the internal temperature of the meat exceeds 145 F.
4. Shred meat and use for *banh mi kep* or *banh xeo*.

### ***Tô* (Millet Porridge, Burkina Faso)**

---

1 cup millet                                      2 cups water

1. Soak the millet for four days, then drain and wash. Grind it into a paste in a mortar or a food processor.
2. Heat the two cups of water in a covered container (pot) until warm. Add the millet paste to the warm water and stir continuously to avoid lumps, until boiling point. Let the mixture boil for 10–15 minutes. Add more millet paste, a bit at a time, while continuing to stir until it becomes thick.

Serve with stews or chili-based sauces.

Serves six to eight.

### ***Tollai-Style Igir* (Papua New Guinea)**

---

This dish is usually made using heated stones dropped into a pot of coconut milk. It has been adapted for preparation on a stove top.

1 chicken	Coconut milk enough to cover the
2 ripe tomatoes	chicken pieces and vegetables
1 bunch Asian/Pacific leafy greens (e.g., water spinach, bok choy, watercress, aibika)	1 pinch salt
1 red chili (more if you like)	Boiled rice or bread enough for six people

1. Chop the chicken, bones, and all, into small pieces that will cook quickly. Dice the tomatoes, skin and seeds, and all. Roughly chop the leafy greens. Slice the chili thinly.
2. Bring the coconut milk to a boil in a pan big enough to comfortably hold the fresh ingredients.
3. Put all the chopped and sliced ingredients into the pan and cover with a tight-fitting lid.

4. Reduce the heat to a gently rolling boil.
5. Cook for 15 minutes or until the chicken pieces are cooked through.
6. Lift out the chicken and the leafy greens onto a serving dish.
7. Pour the coconut milk into a soup tureen or similar dish.
8. Place both dishes on the table. Guests should serve themselves some of the coconut milk broth first.

Serves six to eight.

### ***Tostadas de Chicharo* (Mexico)**

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|--|--|
| 1/2 pound fresh or frozen green peas             | 1/2 cup canola oil                           |
| 10 whole corn tortillas, or prepackaged tostadas | One 6 ounces package ranchero cheese, grated |
| 1 tablespoon kosher salt, or to taste            |  |

1. Place green peas in a small amount of water in a saucepan. Bring to boil, reduce heat, and simmer until tender, about five minutes (or, if frozen, follow package directions for cooking).
2. Place cooked peas in the bowl of a blender or food processor (or *molcajete*) and puree; season with salt to taste.
3. To prepare tostadas from tortillas, heat oil in a skillet and fry each tortilla until crisp (you may need more oil). Drain tostadas.
4. Spread each tostada with green peas puree and garnished with ranchero cheese.

Makes 10 tostadas, serves 5–10.

### **Traditional Hot Wine from Alsace (France)**

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 lemon, zested and saved                 | 1 cinnamon stick                    |
| 2 oranges, zested and saved               | 2 cloves                            |
| 1 quart red wine (Pinot Noir for example) | Pinch or 1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg |

1. Zest the orange and lemon. Set zest aside.
2. Dice the orange and lemon.
3. Mix wine, sugar, cinnamon, and zests in a deep pan. Heat over low heat for three to five minutes. Add spices and heat on low heat for 20 minutes.

- Place some of the diced oranges and lemon in each glass. Pour hot wine through a strainer into glasses and serve.

Serves four to six.

## Tunisian *Fricassée* (Tunisia)

---

(Courtesy of Alia Ktari Benslimane)

### For the Bread

5 cups flour	4 peppers (red or green)
2 eggs	8 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons yeast	One 8-ounce can of tuna fish
1/2 cup oil	4 eggs, boiled
2 tablespoons warm water	Green and black olives
1 tablespoon salt	Capers
A pinch of sugar	2 potatoes, boiled
	Salt, pepper, olive oil and lemon, to taste

### For the Stuffing, Grilled or Roasted

*Harissa* sauce (hot chili sauce)

8 tomatoes

- In a large bowl, put the yeast in two tablespoons of warm water, add one to two tablespoons of flour, and mix well. The mixture must not be too thin or thick. Cover it with a cloth and let rise for one hour.
- In the meantime, mix the dry ingredients in a large bowl (flour, salt, and sugar). Make a hole in the center and add the leavening agent (yeast, water, and flour), half cup of oil, and two eggs. Knead the dough by hand or in the mixer for about 10 minutes, or until the dough does not break when stretched between two fingers. Cover and let rise in a warm place for at least one hour.
- After the dough has doubled its size, knead and form 20 balls. Shape the balls into elongated buns and leave them to rise in a warm place for about 30 minutes or until they double in size.
- Heat oil and deep fry the buns till golden brown.
- Dry them on paper towels, slice them in half on one side, spread the *harissa* liberally inside, then add the stuffing of your choice.
- For the stuffing:* grill the tomatoes, peppers, and garlic and cut into small pieces. Dice two boiled potatoes. You may also choose to add canned tuna,

diced hard-boiled eggs, capers, and olives. Season with salt and pepper, a drizzle of olive oil, and a few drops of lemon juice.

Makes 20.

## **Turon (Philippines)**

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*Turon* are Filipino deep-fried sweet bananas and jackfruit in wonton or egg roll wrapping.

1 bunch *saba* of about 10–12 pieces (sweet cooking bananas or *Musa balbisiana*). If *saba* are not available, other cooking bananas may be used, such as plantains (*Musa acuminata*).

1/4 cup brown sugar

Cooking oil

Two 10-ounce packages of *lumpia* (egg roll or spring roll) wrappers. Defrost if frozen.

Egg white

1 pound of fresh jackfruit flesh (10 ounces canned or frozen jackfruit can be substituted)

1. Peel *saba*, then half these lengthwise. If using bananas other than *saba*, peel and cut into two- to three-inch-long segments, then half them lengthwise.
2. Cut jackfruit into likewise segments.
3. Pair a portion of jackfruit with a banana half and sprinkle with brown sugar.
4. Separate one *lumpia* wrapper and place on a tray or cutting board.
5. Place the sugared fruit on the lower half of the *lumpia* wrapper.
6. Roll the side closest to you over the fruit away from you until reaching the middle of the wrapper.
7. Fold the ends of the wrapper toward the middle. *Optional:* Some cooks leave the ends of the *turon* open so these become very crunchy when fried.
8. Continue rolling up and seal the open ends with a dab of egg white to keep the roll intact.
9. Brush the roll with egg white and dredge it in brown sugar.
10. Heat a few inches of cooking oil in a heavy pot to deep-fry the *turon*.
11. When the *turon* floats, gently take it from the hot oil and place onto a paper towel to drain off the excess oil.

### ***Tzatziki* Sauce (Yogurt Dip, Greece)**

---

4 Persian or one large seedless cucumber, peeled, deseeded, and grated	2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
16 ounces Greek yogurt	1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
2 cloves garlic, crushed	1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1. Sprinkle the cucumber with a little salt and leave for 30 minutes. Squeeze out the water and place in a mixing bowl.
2. Add the yogurt, garlic, and dill, and mix well. Taste and adjust salt if necessary and transfer to a serving dish.
3. Drizzle with the olive oil.

### ***Vetkoek* (Oil Cakes, South Africa)**

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4 cups of (bread) flour	2-1/4 cup of (butter) milk or water
1 tablespoon dry yeast	8 cups sunflower or peanut oil for deep-frying
2 tablespoons sugar	
2 teaspoons salt	Use ingredients at room temperature

1. Put the flour, yeast, and sugar in a large (plastic) bowl and mix with a wooden spoon.
2. Add the salt, and while stirring slowly, add the milk or water, stir until a thick batter. Cover with plastic or a moist (clean) kitchen towel. Allow to rise for 1 to 1-1/2 hour in a warm spot or at room temperature for 2 to 2-1/2 hours.
3. Put the oil in a large pot with a thick bottom. Heat the oil on high heat to approx. 375 F.
4. Dip two tablespoons in the hot oil. Use one spoon to scoop out a spoonful of dough and the other to drop it in the hot oil. Repeat the method. Make sure the pot doesn't become too crowded.
5. Lower the heat to medium; when done, the (golden brown) vetkoek will turn over all by itself. Otherwise, and if to brown, turn the vetkoek around with a fork or spoon.
6. Vetkoek, the size of a tennis ball, will need around four minutes. Remove the vetkoek from the pot with a slotted spoon and put them on a dish covered with a layer of kitchen paper (the paper absorbs the oil).

If eaten cold, it is advisable to use buttermilk to prepare the dough because regular milk will make them greasy.

Makes 12–16.

## ***Xiao Chi* (Crossed Hands Dumplings)**

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*Xiao chi* is served in a small bowl of about four to five dumplings each. Ten of these dumplings make a more substantial meal. This recipe makes about 100 “crossed hands dumplings,” which freeze very well for later use.

2-ounce piece of ginger, peeled	1 teaspoon rice wine or dry sherry
1/4 cup water	3/4 teaspoon salt
16 ounces minced pork, ideally with about 30% fat	1/4 teaspoon white pepper
1 egg, beaten	3 tablespoons chicken or pork stock
1 tablespoon sesame oil	100 store-bought wonton wrappers

1. Crush the piece of ginger very well to release flavor and let it soak in 1/4 cup water.
2. Mix minced pork with the soaking water from the ginger, the beaten egg, sesame oil, rice wine, salt, and white pepper. Add chicken or pork stock, a half teaspoon at a time to add moisture to the mix.
3. With a wonton wrapper laying on one hand, stuff with about 1/2 tablespoon of filling. Enclose by folding the wrapper into a triangle. Seal by pressing the two sides gently.
4. Take the two ends of the triangle and fold down until the tips meet and overlap slightly. Press to bind the ends. This is the “crossed hands” gesture of the name.
5. Have ready a large pan of boiling water.
6. Gently place dumplings, a few at a time, in the water, not crowding, and boil until filling is cooked through (about three minutes). Drain and put on top of the condiment (see the following text). Mix lightly.

If desired, garnish with chopped green onions or cilantro, or finely chopped raw garlic or ginger.

## **Red Oil Condiment**

This recipe is for a small portion of five *chao shou*; multiply quantities by the number of portions being prepared. There are many variations to the red oil recipe including those that include sugar or black vinegar. Sichuan peppercorn is the most distinctive of spices in this cuisine but could be hard to find and may be omitted. Occasionally, you might find a Sichuanese brand of chili oil that already has Sichuan peppercorn added to it.

1 tablespoon chili oil	Up to 2 teaspoons black vinegar to taste (optional)
2 teaspoons light soy sauce	
1 teaspoon dark soy sauce	Pinch of Sichuan peppercorn powder (optional)
1 tablespoon pork or chicken stock	
1/2 teaspoon sesame oil	Mix the earlier ingredients and ladle into a small serving bowl.
Up to 1 teaspoon sugar to taste (optional)	

### **Yakitori (Japan)**

---

Yakitori literally means grilled chicken and is the Japanese equivalent of southeast Asian satay. Small chunks of chicken are threaded onto a bamboo skewer about seven inches long. They may be interlarded with inch-long slices of baby leek, and chicken livers may be used, but on separate skewers.

A dip is made as follows:

3 fluid ounces sake	1-1/2 fluid ounces mirin (a spirit-based sweetener, 14% alcohol)
6 fluid ounces soy sauce	2 tablespoons sugar

1. Mix all the ingredients together in a small pan and bring to a boil.
2. Have ready a heated grill (a Japanese hibachi grill is good). Put the skewers over hot coals (as in a barbecue) taking care not to let the skewers burn and baste with the dip once the chicken juices have started to run. Repeat this several times until the chicken is done, then eat from the skewer, preferably while still hot. Whole sparrows are cooked in the same way, the head providing a much appreciated crunch.

### **Yellow Man Irish Toffee (Ireland)**

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1. Melt the butter in a saucepan, then add the sugar, golden syrup, water, and vinegar. Stir until all the ingredients are melted. Then boil the mixture until a stage known as “hard crack” is achieved. To test hard crack, spoon a little of the mixture from the main bowl into a basin of cold water until it cools, then pick up and rub between finger and thumb. When the finger and thumb are separated, the string of toffee should break sharply. Or use a candy thermometer.
2. When this point has been reached, stir in the bicarbonate of soda, which should cause the mixture to foam up.
3. Turn out the mixture onto a slab tray that has been oiled or greaseproofed. When cool enough to handle, pull the mixture with buttered hands until pale/light in color.
4. When completely hard, break into small chunks.

## **Zapiekanka (Open-Faced Sandwich, Poland)**

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(Adapted from <http://www.polishmeals.com>)

One 12-inch loaf of French bread (baguette), cut in half and then horizontally to make four pieces

1/2 pound mushrooms	1 tablespoon chopped oregano
4 tablespoons butter	1 tablespoon ground paprika, hot or mild to taste
4 slices of gouda or <i>mazarell</i> o cheese	Ketchup and mayonnaise to taste
6 slices of ham or salami	

1. Cut the bread into quarters to make four pieces. Scoop out some of the bread to make room for the filling.
2. Melt butter in a heavy skillet. Add mushrooms and sauté until cooked through.
3. Fill each half of bread with sautéed mushrooms.
4. Layer the cheese over the mushrooms, then the slices of meat.
5. Sprinkle bread halves with oregano and paprika.
6. Have ready a hot broiler. Set filled bread under the broiler for one to two minutes or until the cheese is melted.

Serve with ketchup; mayonnaise is optional.

Serves two.



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